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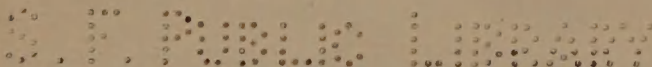


JAMES  
AND  
PHILIP VAN ARTEVELD.

TWO EPISODES IN THE HISTORY OF THE  
FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

By JAMES HUTTON.

AUTHOR OF "A HUNDRED YEARS AGO," "MISSIONARY WORK IN THE SOUTHERN  
SEAS," "CENTRAL ASIA: FROM THE ARYAN TO THE COSSACK," ETC., ETC.



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## PREFACE.

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THE purport of this volume is simply to place in their true light, before English readers, the characters and careers of two remarkable men, who, for the space of well nigh six centuries, have been cruelly misunderstood and misrepresented. It was, perhaps, natural that the early chroniclers should mistake the Van Artevelde, father and son, for mere blatant, self-seeking demagogues. Connected for the most part by birth, or association, with the feudal nobility of the period, Froissart and his copyists learned from their childhood to look down upon the commonalty as an inferior race of mankind, brought into the world to subserve the interests and pleasures of the great lords. In their eyes there was no neutral, no intermediate, ground between the patricians and the plebeians. It was for the former to command, for the latter to obey—for the former to enjoy life, for the latter to render life enjoyable. The upheaval of the lower orders and the apparition of James van Artevelde were phenomena unprecedented in their

experience, and therefore to be denounced as monstrous and diabolical.

Gilles li Muisis and Jehan le Bel were the first, so far as I am aware, to give a totally erroneous interpretation to a movement which alarmed their ignorance and confounded their sagacity. Had the matter, however, rested in their hands it is probable that posterity would have heard very little either of the Communes of Flanders, or of their two greatest captains. But in the hands of Froissart history became a lifelike romance, imbued with personal interest, and glowing with brilliant pictures of gallant feats of arms, of knightly enterprise and prowess, of the heroic courage and devotion of high-born dames and damsels, and also of the outrageous presumption of the baser sort, who actually claimed a common humanity and put forth titles and privileges of their own. It would be unfair to accuse the Canon of Chimay of wilfully embellishing, or distorting, the facts which came to his knowledge. He lived in an age of memorable events, and moved amongst the great men who were carving out history with the sword, and who made free use of his pen to record and emblazon their own achievements. He belonged to a pre-critical era, and thought no harm in repeating each tale as it was told to him. He accepted, without hesitation, the evidence of eye-witnesses, even when extolling their own successes



or glossing over their own failures. It was not for him to cross-examine his munificent patrons, or even the courteous knights who, in friendly converse, unrolled the sparkling narrative of all that they had heard, seen, or imagined, in the course of their adventurous lives. To the inventive reminiscences of Robert de Namur we are indebted for the charming, if fictitious, episode of the surrender of Calais, and for the vigorous delineation of the sea-fight off Winchelsea. To Froissart's own visit to Damme, Sluys, Bruges, and Ghent, we owe the minute touches which impart so much animation to his story of Philip van Arteveld. From the lips of the very actors in those troublous scenes he took down the details which came under the cognizance of each, or which each could repeat at direct second-hand. But it must not be forgotten that, although he made a point of committing to paper, before he lay down to rest, whatever he had learned during the daylight, his labours usually began at a late hour, after a joyous supper, when imagination is apt to come to the aid of memory. In any case he failed to appreciate the two episodes in the annals of the Flemish Communes which this little volume is intended to illustrate.

There may be a certain lack of reverence in presuming to criticise the most fascinating of all chronicles, but, after all, truth is more to be regarded

than sentiment, and the two great citizens of Ghent have been suffered to remain much too long under a cloud of misapprehension and obloquy. The late Mr. Wm. Longman,\* it is true, rendered full justice to the noble aspirations of James van Arteveld, and showed conclusively that what he aimed at was constitutional government, though the form might be democratic. But Philip van Arteveld has been less fortunate, or, rather, he has been peculiarly unfortunate in being made the hero of Sir Henry Taylor's dramatised poem. Although adhering with wonderful fidelity to Froissart's narrative, the English poet has added an incident of remarkable beauty, but which is painfully injurious to the moral character of the victor of Beverhoutsveld. Not content with bestowing upon Philip a beautiful, accomplished, and virtuous wife in Adriana van Merestyn, Sir Henry Taylor links him at her death with the runaway mistress of the Duke of Bourbon, idealised into an abstract personification of love and purity. Now, in the drama, Philip's marriage does not take place till some time in May, 1382, and in six months he buries and forgets his wife and becomes enthralled by Elena della Torre, — and all this because Froissart mentions that a "damoiselle" had accompanied him from Ghent to Roosebeke, the "damoiselle" being no other than his wife, Yolande van den

\* "History of the Life and Times of Edward III.," 1862.

Broucke. Sir Henry Taylor, however, renders due homage to the many great qualities which characterised his hero, and which he sums up with much force and feeling. The speaker is the king's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy :—

Dire rebel though he was,  
Yet with a noble nature and great gifts  
Was he endow'd—courage, discretion, wit,  
An equal temper and an ample soul,  
Rock-bound and fortified against assaults  
Of transitory passion, but below  
Built on a surging subterranean fire  
That stirr'd and lifted him to high attempts.  
So prompt and capable and yet so calm,  
He nothing lack'd in sovereignty but the right,  
Nothing in soldiership except good fortune.

With respect to James van Arteveld, in the absence of any positive evidence one way or the other, I have not ventured to assert that he was neither himself a brewer nor the husband of a "brewster," whether widow or maiden; but in my own mind I have not the slightest doubt that the tradition is entirely based upon his being admitted a member of the Brewers'-Guild two years before his death. This was one of the fifty-two minor crafts, and for that reason was chosen by Van Arteveld, who, by birth, belonged to the Weavers'-Guild, which stood at the head of the industrial orders of Ghent. To the wine-drinking knights and chroniclers a brewer of the thick, muddy, ill-fermented beer of those times,

which needed an admixture of honey to render it at all palatable, may well have seemed a common fellow of very plebeian origin. I have followed M. de Lettenhove in giving him to wife a daughter of Sohier de Courtrai, in preference to adopting M. Voisin's theory that he was a grandson of the venerable Lord of Dronghen, and that he married a lady named Christine, of the illustrious house of Baronaige; but I confess that I can adduce no very cogent reason for the faith that is in me. Except to refute the misrepresentations of the ancient chroniclers, and the careless repetitions of their blind followers, it might have been wiser simply to acknowledge that the youth and early manhood of James van Arteveld are involved in so much obscurity, that nothing certain is known either as to his pursuits and occupation, or as to the name of his wife.

For the rest, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to the admirable works produced by M. de Lettenhove and Professor Vanderkindere. In my list of authorities I have not mentioned Froissart or a host of subsequent chroniclers whom I have carefully consulted and collated. The occasional passages from Froissart are either my own version, or have been taken from Colonel Johnes' translation.

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PART I.



EARLY HISTORY OF FLANDERS.





# JAMES AND PHILIP VAN ARTEVELD.

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## PART I.

### EARLY HISTORY OF FLANDERS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

How Peopled—Baldwin Bras-de-Fer—The Minne, or Ghilde—  
Rising Influence of the Counts—Robert of Flanders—Charles  
of Denmark—William Longsword—Thierry of Alsace—  
Power of the Ghildes—Foundation of Damme—Philip of  
Flanders and Philip Augustus—Baldwin, Emperor of Con-  
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THE name of Fleanderland, or the land of the  
“flymings,” or fugitives, was originally confined to a  
broad strip of territory along the sea-coast between  
the country of the Gauls and Friesland. It was in  
the fourth and fifth centuries that these fugitive, or  
emigrant, Germans and Saxons established them-  
selves on the coast of what is now called West  
Flanders. They were known as *Læti*, an appellation  
afterwards corrupted into *Laeten* (*Colonus* or *Hospes*),  
and applied to freemen engaged in agricultural pur-  
suits. In the *Notitia Imperii* of Theodosius the  
region inhabited by them is described as the *Littus*

*Saxonicum*, but that epithet was more fully deserved at a later period when Charlemagne forcibly planted along this coast some thousands of Saxon colonists, for the double purpose of repelling the incursions of the Northmen, and of serving as hostages for the orderly conduct of their barbarous kinsfolk beyond the eastern borders of his Empire. Their descendants long retained a savage craving for licence—for of true liberty they had not the faintest conception—and were unfavourably distinguished until a much later period for their coarse manners and brutal disposition.

In the hope of maintaining a semblance of tranquillity among his Flemish subjects, Charlemagne appointed a Forestier, whose duty it was to enforce obedience to the law and collect imposts, as well as to preserve as an Imperial Chase the extensive forests which then covered the country, and to breed hawks and falcons for the special use of the Emperor. This arrangement was of very brief duration. In the reign of Charles the Bald, a rude Flemish chieftain, Baldwin, surnamed Bras-de-Fer, or Iron-arm, ran away with the King's daughter Judith, but after experiencing many vicissitudes of fortune, was pardoned and taken into favour. Baldwin thereupon built a castle commanding a bridge over the little river Reye, with a chapel to receive certain relics of St. Donatus sent to him by the Archbishop of Rheims. Outside the walls he erected houses for the reception of merchants and itinerant traders, and laid out a *mâl-berg*, or place of meeting for freemen. A small town rose under the protection of the castle walls, and was called Brugge

or Bruggensele, from the bridge to which it primarily owed its existence. After a time the toll house on the Reye gradually developed into the renowned and opulent city of Bruges, famous at a subsequent period for the beauty of its women. The title of Markgraf, or Warden of the Marches, was conferred upon the successful adventurer, who suppressed the ravages of the Northmen and extended his personal influence far and wide.

His son, who married a daughter of Alfred the Great, was cast in a different mould. Under his comparatively feeble administration the Northmen encamped at the confluence of the Lys and the Scheldt, a situation already marked as the cradle of the great city of Ghent, whence they made frequent raids into France, and depopulated the adjacent districts of Brabant and Flanders. Though incapable of opposing the Northern pirates, Baldwin the Bald—as he loved to call himself after his grandfather Charles—was not devoid of ambition. He accordingly made himself master of Arras, and strengthened the fortifications of St. Omer, Ypres, and Bergues. He was succeeded by Arnulf, or Arnold the Great, who appears to have been the first Count of Flanders, and to have lived at a time of universal anarchy. The end of the world, indeed, was commonly believed to be at hand, the only difference of opinion arising from the computation of a period of one thousand years—some reckoning from the birth, others from the death of Jesus. All alike threw off the restraints of religion and morality, and did that which was good in their own eyes.

In the course of the tenth century Bruges had waxed great and wealthy through its trade with England, while the Ghent people constructed a port at the junction of their two rivers. The Flemings, nevertheless, were still noted for the boorishness of their demeanour, their addiction to intemperance, and their excessive turbulence. Their pagan ancestors had been accustomed to form associations for their mutual protection against accidents by fire or water, and similar misadventures. These unions were called *Minne*, or Friendships—an idea reproduced in the *Amicitie*, to which allusion is so frequently made in the deeds of ancient corporations. Gathered in a circle round the sacrificial fire, the associates drained, each in his turn, three horns of beer, or mead: the first, in honour of the gods; the second, in reverent remembrance of the warriors of olden time deemed worthy of a seat in the halls of Odin; and the third, in loving memory of friends and kinsmen, reposing in the sleep of death beneath the mounds of turf in the midst of which their survivors were seated. After a time the name of *Minne* came to be supplanted by that of *Ghilde*, meaning a feast at the common expense. Each ghilde was placed under the tutelage of a departed hero, or demigod, and was managed by officers elected by the members—social equality being the foundation of each fraternity. Subsequent to the introduction of Christianity the demigod was replaced by a saint, while the members were enjoined to practise works of piety. The clergy, however, viewed these associations with marked displeasure, on account of the habitual intemperance by which they were cha-

racterised. The spirit of the Minne may nevertheless be traced in the fundamental rules and regulations of all, or nearly all, the corporations of Flanders.

Arnulf, or Arnold the Great, was succeeded by Arnulf the Younger, after whom three Baldwins, each in his turn, governed the county. Baldwin the Bearded added Valenciennes and Walcheren to the domains of his predecessors—the former being held as a fief of the German Empire. He was followed by Baldwin the Pious, who proclaimed the Truce of God, which limited bloodshed to three days in the week. His piety, however, did not restrain him from laying his hands upon the Imperial city of Ghent, or from coercing Henry III. of Brabant to cede to him the territory lying between Ghent and Alost. He further increased his influence by obtaining for his eldest son the hand of Richilda, Countess of Hainault, and by marrying his daughter Matilda to William Duke of Normandy. Another daughter, Judith, was given in marriage to Tostig, son of Earl Godwin, who fell at Stamford Bridge fighting against his brother Harold, the last of the Saxon kings of England. A considerable number of Flemish knights joined Duke William's expedition at St. Valéry-sur-Somme, and greatly distinguished themselves at Senlac, winning their full share of rewards and honours from the Conqueror. It is recorded, however, that very many of them perished miserably within a brief period, while the commonalty of Flanders sympathised with the conquered Saxons, and accorded a hospitable reception to the fugitives, not unmindful of their common origin,

or of the hardships they themselves had had to endure as exiles in bygone times.

During the minority of Philip I. of France, the young prince and his dominions were confided to the guardianship of Baldwin the Pious, as the premier vassal of the French crown, and it is pleasant to know that the delicate trust was discharged with equal prudence and loyalty. The third of these Baldwins was surnamed the Good, but his occupancy of the earldom lasted only three years, when he was nominally succeeded by his son Arnold the Simple, though virtually by his widow Richilda of Hainault, who took for her second husband William Fitz-Osborn, Count of Breteuil in Normandy and Earl of Hereford in England. The Flemings, however, rose against their foreign ruler, and under the leadership of Robert of Friesland, uncle to their Count, attacked and routed on the 22nd of February, 1071, a French army assembled at Mount Cassel under the personal command of Philip the First. The French king and Richilda fled from the field, but Fitz-Osborn was slain, as was also Arnold the Simple. A second defeat, a few years later, induced Richilda to devote herself to a religious life, upon which Robert of Friesland became Robert of Flanders.

The new Count was continually at strife with the Normans, and is represented as a man of violent character and fond of adventurous enterprise. Under his sway, though not by his example, the Flemings became much softened and humanised by the assiduous efforts of the Bishop of Soissons to inculcate the principles of Christianity, and to weld the rude bar-



barians into the semblance of a civilised nation—so far as civilisation and nationality were understood in those days. Towards the close of the century the Count went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, leaving his States in charge of his son Robert. On his return from the Holy Land he stopped for a while at Constantinople, and promised the Emperor Alexis Comnenus that he would bring to his aid five hundred Flemish men-at-arms. The promise was fulfilled, and for the space of four years these doughty warriors were a terror to the Moslemin. As the Count traversed France on his homeward journey, he was everywhere treated with marked distinction as a Soldier of Christ, and in the autumn of 1092 he ended his warlike career in the castle of Wynendael, near Thorout.\* In the same year in which Robert II. of Flanders passed away, Peter the Hermit stirred up the nations of Christendom to rescue the Holy City from the Saracens. The first crusade owed its success in a great degree to the valour and prudence of a Flemish knight, Godfrey de Bouillon, who was accompanied by Robert, Count of Flanders, and a gallant band of stalwart Flemings. The Count returned to his own dominions in safety, but only to fall in a petty skirmish beneath the walls of Meaux, while fighting for King Louis VI. His son, Baldwin VII., likewise met with a violent death, being slain by an arrow shot

\* The name of this picturesque little town, "Thor's Wood," recalls to mind the Scandinavian origin of the people. Scarce any traces remain of the old château of Wynendael, the favourite residence of the Counts of Flanders in their palmy days. Readers of "Esmond" will not easily forget the battle so gallantly won, and so often referred to, by General Webb in 1708.

from the ramparts of the Castle of Eu, near Tréport, A.D. 1119.

The Earldom of Flanders then devolved on Charles of Denmark, a near relative, who displayed great vigour alike in repelling aggression and in suppressing intestine tumults. It is worthy of note, that a large body of burghers under the banners of their respective parishes voluntarily marched under his command to the French camp, in the war with the Emperor Henry V. So genuine and widespread was the respect inspired by Count Charles, that he was offered in succession the Imperial crown, and that of Jerusalem, both of which he had the good sense to refuse. His attention and time were wholly devoted to an attempt to humanise the Flemings settled along the sea-shore, but his well-meant labours brought about a conspiracy against himself, in which some of the principal inhabitants of Bruges took an active part. He was consequently stabbed to death while engaged in prayer in the church of St. Donatus, and several of his friends and advisers were brutally murdered about the same time. The assassins, with the exception of a few who temporarily escaped—but who were subsequently apprehended and put to death—sustained a regular siege in the tower of the church, and were ultimately mastered with great difficulty. Many miracles, of course, were performed at the tomb of the martyred Count, and the tragic event was turned to exceedingly profitable account by the local clergy.

Notwithstanding his positive promise that the Flemings should be allowed to proceed, without



molestation, to the election of a new Count, Louis VI. compelled them to accept William of Normandy, surnamed Long-Sword, grandson of Matilda. William was worthy of his patron. He began by pledging himself to the abolition of the imposts which had been arbitrarily levied by his predecessors, but he took no steps to redeem his word. Insurrections thereupon broke out in several places, the men of Ghent in particular protesting against his breach of faith. At the suggestion of Henry I. of England, whose interest it was to humble his nephew—whose father he had supplanted—the Flemings made choice of Thierry of Alsace as their Earl, and William only saved his life by fleeing to Ypres, whence he forwarded an appeal to the King of France. The citizens of Bruges also addressed a memorial to Louis VI., but couched in a different strain. They fearlessly reminded their suzerain that he had nothing whatever to do with the election of a Count of Flanders, which rested exclusively with the nobles and burghers of the county, and that the Count himself was only bound to furnish a certain number of men-at-arms for the lands he actually held of the King. To this outspoken document Louis VI. returned no reply beyond laying siege to Lille. A serious reverse sustained by his arms, and the approach of the English monarch, constrained him, however, to retire into his own territories and to renounce the cause of William Longsword. That brave young prince, thrown upon his own resources, acquitted himself manfully. At Ruisselede he inflicted a severe defeat upon his rival, and drove him in headlong flight to Bruges, but failed to follow up

his victory, and being shortly afterwards mortally wounded, he died at the early age of twenty-seven.

Thierry of Alsace was now, A.D. 1128, acknowledged by all his neighbours Count of Flanders. His government was conducted upon popular principles. Under his rule the Ghildes obtained great power, founded on the election of their own headmen or leaders, whence their regulations came to be called *cyr*, *cyre*, gradually changing into *keure* and *chora*—signifying “free choice.” The oath taken by members was known as the *cyre-ath*, the headmen as *cyre-mannen*—*keuremannen* and *choremanni*—and the associates as *cyre* or *keure broeders*. The Ghildes were the base of the municipal administration, and gradually assumed the government of the town, but took another form and appellation. The word was thenceforward applied, in its restricted sense of Guild, as referring to trade corporations, while the previous organisation came to be described in French and Latin documents as Commune or Communia, and embraced all who were entitled to gather together in the *couter*, or public place, when the bell rang out the summons from the town belfry. In Flanders the Communes grew out of popular institutions of ancient date, and, though, no doubt, their influence was sensibly increased by their confirmation at the hands of King or Count, they did not owe their origin to royal or seigniorial charters. Under the Alsatian dynasty Communes sprang up in all parts of Flanders, and helped greatly to bring about the marvellous prosperity enjoyed by that industrious if turbulent population until it passed beneath the Spanish yoke.

It may be here parenthetically remarked that Thierry brought back from Jerusalem a small vessel containing what he believed to be a few drops of the blood of the Son of Man squeezed from the sponge used by Joseph of Arimathea, which was reverently deposited in the chapel of St. Basil, at Bruges, since known as the Chapel of the Holy Blood. He died in the first month of 1168, and was succeeded by his son Philip.

During his father's absence in Palestine the government of Flanders had been vigorously conducted by Philip, whose principal military exploit was the signal defeat of the Earl of Holland. The vanquished Count was detained in honourable confinement for three years, at the expiration of which he despatched, according to agreement, a thousand skilled labourers from his own territories to throw up embankments, with a view to save Bruges from being overwhelmed by the sea, at that time a real danger. Accustomed to daily and hourly struggle with the ocean, the Hollanders built substantial embankments, on which they erected houses and formed the nucleus of thriving towns and hamlets. It was thus the once crowded port of Damme rose out of the sandy swamp, and became the *entrepôt* of Western Europe. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, William of Brittany, the poetic chaplain of Philip Augustus, was at a loss for words to describe the grandeur and opulence of that ephemeral seaport. In his glib doggerel he wrote—

Quo valde speciosus erat Dam nomine vicus  
Lenifluis jucundus aquis atque ubere glebæ,  
Proximitate maris, portuque, situque, superbus.

He goes on to say, "Here might be seen riches from all parts of the world brought hither by ships in such quantity as to exceed our utmost expectations; piles of silver ingots, gold dust, the tissues of Syria, China, and the Cyclades, many-coloured skins from Hungary, the veritable grains that give to scarlet its brilliant hues,\* argosies freighted with the wines of Gascony or Rochelle, with iron and other metals, with cloths and other merchandise accumulated by English and Flemish merchants in this place for exportation to the different regions of the earth, whence large profits redound to their owners, who thus abandon their wealth to the caprice of fortune, with a feeling of hope not unmingled with anguish."

Philip of Alsace warmly espoused the cause of Thomas à Becket, who took refuge for a time in the Count's château at Maele—situated a short distance beyond the Ste. Croix gate of Bruges—and bestowed a particular benediction upon the chapel. At the death of Louis VII., the young prince Philip Augustus was placed under the Count's protection, this being the second time that a Count of Flanders had been honoured with a similar trust. In this instance, the Count proved more faithful to his suzerain than to his own people. He spared no precautions, indeed, to strengthen his own position in the Vermandois by fortifying Amiens, Nesle, and Peronne; but, on the other hand, he prevailed upon his ward

\* The worthy chaplain was evidently not aware that the colour of cochineal is derived from the dried carcases of the female of the *coccus cacti*. His actual words are: "*Granaque vera quibus quadet squarлата rubere.*"

to marry his niece, daughter of the Count of Hainault, and settled the County of Artois upon her as a dowery, including the towns of Arras, Aire, St. Omer, Hesdin, and Bapaume. That ill-judged cession was the source of unnumbered woes to Flanders. The possession of Artois was the object of continual wars, treachery, and violence, and was constantly dangled before the eyes of the Flemings by every aspirant to their sympathy and support.

Philip Augustus soon wearied of the Count's tutelage, and at the early age of sixteen took the reins of government into his own hands. Headstrong and precipitate, he marked his accession to power by a premature attempt to break down the independence of his great vassals, and by his rashness united them in the bonds of self-defence. Philip of Alsace—or, as he is also commonly called, Philip of Flanders—in-  
vaded France with a considerable army, and, laying waste the country as he advanced, approached almost within striking distance of Paris. His active energy, however, was by that time exhausted, and he not unwillingly agreed to a truce which ripened into a treaty of peace. He afterwards joined the Third Crusade and died under the walls of Ptolemais. His widow, Matilda of Portugal, was constrained to content herself with her dower, West Flanders, which then included Lille, Cassel, Furnes, Bergues, and Bourbourg, while East Flanders was seized by Baldwin the Magnanimous, Count of Hainault, in the name of his wife, Margaret of Alsace, sister of the deceased Philip. On hearing of the death of the Count of Flanders, Philip Augustus suddenly quitted

the Holy Land, and hurried back to France with the intention of asserting his claims as husband of the late Count's niece. But in those days either voyage or journey from Syria to France was a serious undertaking, and long before the French King reached his own dominions the opportunity for peaceful appropriation had slipped away.

The son of Baldwin the Magnanimous, who bore his father's name, though without the honourable epithet attached to it, commenced his government of Flanders by the exhibition of much weakness and timidity. Not satisfied with doing homage to Philip Augustus, he surrendered to him the fiefs of Boulogne, Guînes, and Oisy, and invoked a sentence of excommunication upon himself if ever he failed in loyalty to his suzerain. This same Baldwin, whom Gibbon characterises as "valiant, pious, and chaste," was chosen Emperor of Constantinople in 1204, in the absence of any more eligible candidate.

His eldest daughter Joan married Ferdinand, son of Sancho, King of Portugal, while her sister Margaret was wedded to Bouchard d'Avesnes, High Bailiff of Hainault. Believing that the time had now arrived for gratifying the earth-hunger with which so many French rulers have been afflicted, Philip Augustus invaded Flanders by sea and by land, and speedily made himself master of Bruges and Ghent. Moved by a savage jealousy he wantonly set fire to Damme, and reduced its well-stored magazines and warehouses to ashes. To a certain extent this act of Vandalism was fitly avenged, for an English fleet under the Earl of Salisbury completely destroyed his ships shut up in



the harbour of Sluys, at that time a spacious arm of the sea, known as the Zwyn, and to which access was obtainable only through a comparatively narrow entrance. At Bouvines Ferdinand was signally defeated and made prisoner, though there is some reason to believe that the result might have been very different had he trusted more to his Flemish militia, and less to his heavy-armed mercenaries. As it was, Ferdinand was carried off to Paris and confined in the newly erected tower of the Louvre, in which more than one of his successors were destined to languish and despair. Philip Augustus was now virtually in possession of the county of Flanders, but took no trouble to make his rule popular with the liberty-loving Communes. A considerable body of Flemish Knights crossed the Channel to England, and distinguished themselves in fighting for King John. They even constituted a formidable portion of the army which scoured the northern counties and entered Berwick, and on their return to Flanders they left behind them one of their number, Hugh de Bailleul, as Warden of the Marches—a name afterwards famous under its English corruption of Baliol.

## CHAPTER II.

Treaty of Melun—The Thirty-Nine of Ghent—The D'Avesnes and the Dampierres—Guy de Dampierre—Development of Civilisation—Prosperity of the Communes—The Hanse of London—Destruction of the Bruges Charters—Philip the Fair of France—His Ambitious Projects.

AFTER her husband had suffered twelve years of imprisonment, the Countess Joan, in order to obtain his release, signed the fatal Treaty of Melun, in 1226, which ceded Lille, Douai, and Sluys as material guarantees for the ultimate payment of his ransom. The Counts of Flanders were further bound not only to take the oath of loyalty by which every great vassal recognised his suzerain, but also to engage themselves as liegemen to follow the French banners in person during the continuance of war, and the Flemish barons swore on their lealty to compel their Count to fulfil this obligation. Two years previously Pope Honorius III. had empowered the King of France, at any time of recusancy, to require the Archbishop of Rheims and the Bishop of Senlis to issue an interdict over the whole or a portion of the County of Flanders, which could only be raised by the consent of the Court of Peers. Louis VIII. died in that same year, and Louis IX.—the St. Louis of French chroniclers — with characteristic generosity



remitted the towns of Lille and Sluys, but in subsequent times this ill-omened treaty furnished his successors, more than once, with a plausible excuse for forcing a quarrel upon the Communes of Flanders.

The liberation of Ferdinand, though presumably agreeable to the Countess, was not of any particular advantage to her subjects, whom no alien ever rightly understood or justly appreciated. For one thing, he took upon himself to reorganise the government of Ghent, which he confided to Thirty-nine magistrates, divided into three categories—*échevins*, councillors, and *vaghes*. The *scepenen* or *échevins*, the *scabini* of Latin writers and official documents, were municipal magistrates, who exercised both judicial and administrative functions; the councillors, or *coremanni*, were elected by the *échevins*, into whose places they stepped in the following year; while the *vaghes* seem to have been supernumeraries without any very definite employment. There was thus an annual change in the personalty of the administration, an arrangement favourable to the Count rather than to the burghers and artisans, but which nevertheless endured until the opening of the fourteenth century.

Shortly after the demise of Ferdinand, in 1233, Joan, Countess of Flanders, married Thomas of Savoy, whose issue by Beatrice of Fresca became Kings of Sardinia and finally of Italy. Her death took place about the year 1240, when she was succeeded by her sister Margaret, who had, in the first instance, married Bouchard d'Avesnes. After the lapse of a good many years it was discovered that Bouchard had once been a deacon, and consequently incapable of entering

into matrimony. Separation was accordingly enjoined by a Papal Bull, upon which Margaret sought consolation in a legal marriage. Curiously enough, very nearly the same objections might have been urged against William de Dampierre, but, for one reason or another, he was left in unmolested possession of the Countess and her wide domain. Margaret thus became the mother of two families who were continually at enmity with one another. In answer to their double appeal, Louis IX. assigned Hainault to John d'Avesnes and Flanders to William de Dampierre, and, with an inconsistency of which Papal Infallibility alone could be capable, the children of Bouchard d'Avesnes were declared to be legitimate while his marriage was still maintained to be sacrilegious and invalid. In 1253 Guy and John de Dampierre were defeated by their half-brothers at West Capelle, and kept in nominal confinement for three years. Guy married Matilda of Béthune, who bore him a son known to historians as Robert de Béthune, and he, in his turn, espoused the daughter of Charles Count of Anjou, brother of Louis IX., and heiress of Nevers. As Austria is said to have recovered by her matrimonial alliances whatever territories or influence were wrested from her by force of arms, so may the reverse be predicated of Flanders.\*

\* M. Michelet remarks : "La femme flamande amena par mariage des maîtres de toute nation, un Danois, un Alsacien, puis un voisin de Hainaut, puis un prince de Portugal, puis des Français de diverses branches ; Dampierre (Bourbon), Louis de Maele (Capet), Philippe le Hardi (Valois) ; enfin, Autriche, Espagne, Autriche encore. Voici maintenant la Flandre sous un Saxon (Cobourg)."—"Hist. de France," liv. v., ch. 11.

To the paltry and selfish ambition of her Counts may be traced the long series of disasters which finally broke down the independence of the Communes, and diverted to other countries the manufacturing and commercial enterprise which can only flourish in the spacious atmosphere of liberty. The Dampierres belonged to a poor, if noble, family of Champagne, and were thoroughly French in tastes, feelings, and aspirations. To live at Court in close relationship with the Royal Family seemed to them the height of earthly happiness, and to gratify that pitiful craving for personal consideration they sacrificed the independence of Flanders, and the true interests of its inhabitants. The French matrimonial alliances were followed by those with the Ducal House of Burgundy, which led to the Spanish marriages, and the practical effacement of Flanders from the political map of Europe.

At the close of 1278 Margaret abdicated in favour of her son Guy, who united the county of Namur to that of Flanders, and ruled from the river Meuse to the sea. For the space of twenty years his Court was renowned throughout Europe for its brilliancy and comparative refinement. He encouraged the Arts, especially that of painting, and was a liberal patron of poets who wrote in the French language. It was in his time that William Uutenhove produced his famous *Reinart de Vos*, which made the tour of Europe after being softened down and somewhat expurgated by German and French adapters. James van Maerlant, author of the *Spiegel Historiae*, or Mirror of History, was a contemporary of Uutenhove, and his gravestone might be seen until quite a recent date in the church-

yard at Damme. The thirteenth century was particularly illustrated by the erection of magnificent churches, monasteries, and town halls unrivalled in any other age or country. The theological seminaries established at Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres turned out many accomplished scholars in that peculiar and unlovely branch of literature, and in some towns we hear of industrial schools for the sons of weavers. Even agriculture was taught in certain monasteries, more especially as regards draining marsh lands and throwing up embankments against river floods and encroachments of the ocean.

The "good towns," as they were called, of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres were exceedingly prosperous. The Communes renounced almost entirely the practices and prejudices of feudalism. Arbitrary imposts were prohibited, trials by ordeal were abolished, and even duels were discountenanced. Artisans were protected alike by their own particular guild and by the State. Public interest was taken in maintaining the character of their workmanship. Salaries were regulated by the skill and industry of the workman, who was carefully provided with work suited to his capacity and temperament. On being admitted a member of his craft-guild, every workman pledged himself by oath to uphold Divine Worship, and to serve the Count loyally and with all his might. For misconduct he was liable to expulsion, while a pension rewarded an upright and honourable career. Foreign traders flocked to Flanders from all parts of Europe. From the end of the twelfth century a considerable importance was attached to the great fairs held at Thorout,

Ypres, and Bruges, where stalls were supplied with the varied products of the three continents. It was, in fact, a land set apart for the observance of a benevolent neutrality. Foreigners and natives of the country alike claimed and obtained the equal protection of the laws. When in 1272 Margaret adopted the high-handed proceeding of confiscating all English wool warehoused at Bruges and Damme, a Welsh trader unhesitatingly went off to Lille and lodged an appeal with the King's Court, which condemned the Countess to pay a heavy indemnity. Two years later Charles of Anjou applied to Guy, who was then governing in his mother's name, to banish the Genoese from Flemish territory, but the thing was found to be impracticable. Flemish ships were met with in the Baltic, in the Mediterranean, and in the Straits of Constantinople, and in every European country Flemish settlers were assured a cordial welcome.

It was in the thirteenth century the different trade guilds of Bruges, bearing in mind that union is strength, established the "Hanse of London," so called from *ansa*, a tie, or bond. Like *minne*, the word was sometimes applied to the goblet, or "loving-cup,"—as we should say—which circulated at the banquets of the association. At first the Hanse was confined to fourteen towns in Flanders and the North of France, to wit—Bruges, Ypres, Damme, Lille, Bergues, Furnes, Orchies, Bailleul, Poperinghe, Oudenburg, Yzendike, Ardenburg, Oostburg, and Ter Mude. A little later it was extended to St. Omer, Arras, Douai, and Cambrai, and finally included Valenciennes, Peronne, St. Quentin, Beauvais,

Abbeville, Amiens, Montreuil, Rheims, and Châlons. The object of the Hanse of London was to monopolise the trade with England, and especially the import of English wool. A constant and abundant supply of the raw material of English growth was indispensable to the busy looms of Flanders, for the home-grown article was wholly insufficient, even when supplemented by the well-filled sacks received from the Cistercian monasteries in Champagne and Burgundy. The governor, or, in modern parlance, the Chairman of the Association, was necessarily a burgher, with the title of Count of the Hanse. It was only in London or at Bruges that membership could be obtained. The entrance-fee was thirty sous three deniers sterling, or five sous three deniers for the son of a member. Certain persons were ineligible; for instance, dyers, firemen, and all such as hawked wares in the streets and thoroughfares, unless they had retired from their respective callings at least twelve months previous to their application for admission, and had actually been received into a guild. Among other privileges, members of the Hanse could be tried only by local magistrates for misdeeds committed in the town where they resided, while commercial disputes were submitted to the arbitration of a Board chosen from the chief towns of Flanders.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century a great calamity befell the men of Bruges. Their ancient Cloth-hall was burnt to the ground, and their municipal charters were consumed at the same time. In spite of their earnest entreaties the Count refused to renew these, or to grant them substitutes, and to evince



his disregard of their boasted freedom, he beheaded five of their best-reputed citizens outside the Bouverie gate. An appeal was accordingly made to Philip the Bold, who forbade the Count to interfere with their rightful resort to the Royal jurisdiction. In the following year Guy consented to grant a Charter, but, instead of simply confirming the former privileges, he introduced clauses which placed the rights of the Communes in the hands of the Count, who was further empowered to make at any time what modifications he pleased, to veto the decisions of the magistrates, and to demand a yearly account of the administration of the municipality. Violent tumults consequently broke out both at Bruges and Ypres, but, as usual, were easily appeased by the promise of concessions backed by a demonstration of force, for the Flemings lacked persistence and constancy, and were ever too prone to act on the impulse of the moment.

It was in a fitful, desultory way that the men of Ghent, likewise, carried on an intermittent enmity with the Count, who aimed at abolishing the government of "The Thirty-nine," in order to replace it by a Council of Thirty, more entirely devoted to his personal interests. The French King took the part of the Count in these frequent squabbles, and imposed heavy fines, to be levied on the property of the Commune. Guy's influence was increased and extended through his skilful manipulation of matrimonial alliances. He seems to have had a real talent for match-making, for the exercise of which he enjoyed exceptional opportunities in the possession of nine sons

and eight daughters, all of whom he married advantageously, and when any one of them lost a husband or a wife he at once set to work to make good the deficiency.

If Philip the Bold had chastised the Flemings with whips, his successor, Philip the Fair, chastised them with scorpions. Devoured by avarice and cupidity, vices shared by his Queen, Joan of Navarre, the new King indulged also in dreams of absolute monarchy. With this view he chose men of low origin to be his ministers and favourites, an example imitated by Louis XI. at a later period. The Rhine was the frontier he coveted for his kingdom. To achieve that purpose he applied himself with much subtlety to the task of breaking down the power of the great vassals of the Crown. By means of pensions and gifts of money he purchased the submission of Brabant, Hainault, Namur, and the princely bishoprics of Cologne and Liège. In France the Crown fiefs were preferred to all others, as great and little "seigneurs" alike were prone to exaction and to acts of petty tyranny; but the Flemings were more than half German, and always distrusted the French kings. It might have been supposed that the Brabançons, who were also of German extraction, would have displayed the same instincts and prejudices, but their jealousy of the commercial prosperity of their Flemish neighbours and kinsfolk made them lean towards the French alliance. Hainault, again, whose traditions and feudal character were largely derived from the Roman Empire, was never friendly towards Flanders, though twice subject to the same Count.



Could these three Principalities have united their power in defence of their common interests it would have been impossible for the kings of France to extend their territories in that direction, but it was reserved for James van Arteveld to realise that seemingly obvious truism, and to form an alliance which only lacked durability to have raised up an impassable barrier against French ambition. Having, however, secured the neutrality of its neighbours, Philip was able to carry out his designs against Flanders without molestation.

His first step was to compel the Count and the Communes to ratify anew the Treaty of Melun, after which he steadily applied himself to fomenting mutual ill-feeling between Guy de Dampierre and his ever-restless and inconstant subjects. In order to weaken the Count's influence in Ghent, he affected to support the pretensions of the Thirty-Nine, and was proportionately chagrined by the advantage taken by Robert de Béthune of his father's absence to effect a reconciliation with the magistrates of that city by cancelling the arbitrary imposts of which they justly complained. On his return to Flanders, Guy found it expedient to sanction all that had been done in his name, and even went so far as to encourage the citizens of the three good towns to restore their fortifications, though in direct opposition to the stipulations of the Treaty of Melun. For the moment the King judged it prudent to dissemble his displeasure, and even assumed a gentle and facile disposition far remote from his real character. There is nothing surprising in the ease with

which he persuaded the feeble and self-indulgent Guy de Dampierre that his best policy was to place himself under the protection of France rather than lay himself open to the insolence of the Communes; though it is somewhat strange that he should have chosen such a moment to propose to Adolphus of Nassau, the newly-elected Emperor, the restitution of Valenciennes, a German fief, but held by a Flemish garrison, and to hand over Flanders to the Count of Hainault. In those days the idea of nationality was as little appreciated as that of patriotism.

## CHAPTER III.

Imprisonment of Guy de Dampierre—Philippine of Flanders—Philip favours the Communes—Release of Guy de Dampierre—Alliance with Edward I.—Battle of Bulscamp—Edward I. lands at Sluys; visits Ghent; returns to England—Guy de Dampierre imprisoned at Compiègne—Philip the Fair in Flanders—Peter Coninck—Outbreak in Bruges—John Breydel—Bruges Matins—Insurrection in the Franc of Bruges—Day of the Golden Spurs—Popular Movements—Robert de Béthune—Treaty of Athies—Louis de Nevers—Treaty of Pontoise—Edward II.

WHATEVER may have been Philip's conduct towards Flanders, it is impossible to feel any sympathy for Guy de Dampierre, as false as he was fickle, and intensely selfish. Relying upon the protection of England, for he had now turned to Edward the First, he imprisoned several magistrates of Ghent, notwithstanding the direct intervention of Philip's representative, and agreed to give his daughter, Philippine, with a handsome dowery, to the son of the English monarch, afterwards Edward the Second. Though conducted with much secrecy, this negotiation did not fail to reach the ears of Philip, who straightway invited the Count to Paris under the pretext of consulting with the great vassals of the Crown as to the condition of the realm. For a brief space Guy hesitated, but, his habitual weakness gaining the

mastery, he at length obeyed the summons, and added to his fatuity by taking with him his sons John and Guy. With much humility he informed his suzerain that he had betrothed his daughter to the Prince of Wales, and was overwhelmed with an explosion of wrath. Philip charged him with disloyalty to France, and produced some very compromising letters which Guy at once denounced as forgeries. However that might be, the Count and his two sons were lodged for six months in the same tower of the Louvre which, for so many years, had echoed the sighs of Ferdinand of Portugal, consort of Joan, Countess of Flanders. In further testimony of his deep resentment, the French King arrested the English gentlemen in the suite of the Count, prohibited the attendance of Flemish traders at the fairs of Champagne, and seized upon Valenciennes.

Guy himself was brought to trial before the Royal Court, but it was no part of Philip's policy to procure his condemnation, which would simply have transferred the earldom of Flanders to Robert de Béthune, at that time supposed to be less manageable than he afterwards proved to be.\* He accordingly appeared to be moved by the prayers of the Flemish deputies, the representations of Amadeus of Savoy, and the exhortations of Pope Boniface VIII., and accepted

\* It is to be regretted that Hendrick Conscience, the historical novelist of Flanders, should have drawn such a flattering and totally unreal portrait of Robert de Béthune, and, indeed, of all the Dampierre family, in his otherwise spirited and vigorous novel of "*De Leeuw van Vlaenderen of De Slag der Gulden Sporen.*" Robert was neither a patriot nor a Richard Cœur de Lion. For the rest, the Dampierres were thoroughly French.

the promise of Robert that his father should not contract any alliance with England. The unfortunate Philippine was sent as a hostage to Paris, where she died in captivity—not without suspicions of foul play on the part of the Queen. Guy himself was released and allowed to return to his own territories, a broken-down, discredited old man, who possessed the Bourbon faculty for learning nothing and forgetting nothing. Notwithstanding his past experiences, he lent himself to the fulfilment of Philip's most odious and abominable instructions. He agreed to the falsification of the currency, to the prohibition of all exports of specie and bullion, and to sumptuary laws which amounted to the confiscation of one-third of all the gold and silver plate of every Flemish landed proprietor whose estates yielded less than 6000 livres a year. In 1295 recourse was had to the hateful impost known as *maltôte*—an obvious corruption of *maltolte*—by which Guy consented to the imposition of a tax of two per cent. on all property, movable or immovable, provided that one-half of the proceeds should be paid to himself, and that his own personal retainers should be exempted from the tax. On the other hand, in the hope of conciliating the Communes, Philip remitted a heavy fine incurred by their opposition to his ordinance respecting the falsification of the currency, and forbade the importation into France of any description of cloth or cheese except from Flanders. He also commanded the restitution of their property in the case of the Lombard merchants residing in that country, and gave orders that the King's officers should produce their sealed letters whenever called

upon to do so. Guy, however, was empowered to do as he pleased with the Thirty-Nine of Ghent, most of whom incontinently fled to Holland, and all were deprived of their office, and their goods declared forfeited. Their successors were nominated from among the Count's avowed adherents.

Following out his fixed policy of weakening his most powerful vassals, Philip gave notice to the townsmen of Valenciennes that they must be prepared in two months to transfer their allegiance to the Count of Hainault. Having no wish to change masters, they appealed to Guy, who, with his customary levity, promised to afford them ample assistance. Philip thereupon pronounced his disfeazance, and summoned him to appear before his Royal Court at Paris. At the same time he voluntarily pledged himself to respect and safeguard the interests and privileges of the Communes, and so far prevailed with that unstable population that the gates of Douai were closed against their Count's son, Robert de Béthune. It is sad to tell that delegates were sent from Bruges and Ghent to accuse their hapless Count of shedding innocent blood, and of acting generally in a rapacious and oppressive manner, as though similar charges might not have been alleged against every great lord in the kingdom of France. On being brought to trial, Guy protested against the King appearing as both accuser and judge, and demanded to be tried by his peers; but Philip replied that the Royal Council exercised supreme jurisdiction, and was the highest Court in the realm. In the end Guy was condemned to restore the seal and keys of the town of Ghent, and to surrender to

the King all rights of jurisdiction throughout Flanders, together with absolute possession of Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Lille, and Douai. All these places, however, were immediately given back to him with the exception of Ghent.

Untaught by bitter experience, no sooner had the Count returned to his castle of Wynendael than he confiscated the property of all Scottish merchants, although Scotland was at the time in alliance with France against England. This fresh act of contumacy was punished by a sentence of forfeiture of his fief, to which Guy replied by calling upon Edward I. to avenge the insult offered to himself in the imprisonment of Philippine, in consequence of her betrothal to his son the heir to the Crown of England. The English monarch at once crossed the Channel, and was met at Grammont by the Emperor Adolphus of Nassau, the Duke of Brabant, and the Counts of Juliers, Flanders, and Bar. These princes bound themselves to make war in concert upon France, and shortly afterwards ambassadors from Flanders and Holland repaired to Ipswich, and signed a treaty by which Edward gave his daughter Elizabeth to the Count of Holland and betrothed Edward of Carnarvon to Philippine's younger sister, Isabella. As more immediate and substantial advantages, Edward engaged to land an army on the French coast, to subsidise the Count of Flanders with a considerable sum of money, and to fix the wool-staple at Bruges.

At the opening of the year 1296, and only two days after affixing his signature to the treaty of Ipswich, Guy de Dampierre renounced his allegiance to the



King of France, and drew up a prolix memorial of the grievances of which he complained. Of this pointless document Philip took no heed beyond addressing a letter to "Guy de Dampierre, Marquis of Namur, calling himself Count of Flanders," but he did not omit to confer some fresh privileges upon the town of Bruges. He also assembled a powerful army for the invasion of Flanders, while the English barons refused to serve in that country because their ancestors had never been called upon to do so. At the same time he incited a conspiracy in Germany against the Emperor Adolphus, which cost the latter both his crown and his life. The French army made at first but little progress. The garrison in Lille was encouraged by the presence of Robert de Béthune, a stout warrior, to make a gallant resistance, and at Bulscamp the fortune of arms seemed to favour the Flemings until deserted by a body of their countrymen,\* who had been induced to espouse the interests of France. The consequences of this treachery were most disastrous. No fewer than 16,000 Flemings are reported to have perished on that fatal field or in the subsequent flight; the thriving little town of Furnes was given to the flames, and Robert de Béthune was compelled to surrender Lille, and retire to Ghent.

\* The Battle of Bulscamp took place on the 20th August, 1297, and was memorable for the first appearance in the Flemish annals of the "*Leliaerds*," or French partisans, so called from *lelie*, the Flemish for "lily," though the French *lys* is more correctly applicable to the yellow Iris or Flag, plucked by the soldiers of Clovis in crossing the river Lys. The Flemish patriots, on the other hand, called themselves "*Klauwaerds*" from *Klauwen*, the claws or paws of a lion—that is, the Lion of Flanders.



Edward I. now made his appearance at Sluys at the head of an ill-disciplined force, numerically weak, and altogether incapable of making head against the comparatively well-organised army of the French King. He had hardly landed, indeed, when a disturbance arose between his sailors and the people of the place, which ended in the total destruction by fire of twenty-five of his ships. On his arrival at Bruges he found the Count at cross purposes with the citizens, who refused either to repair their fortifications or to take up arms against their suzerain. In the meanwhile the English men-at-arms, who had been left at Sluys, fastened a quarrel upon the citizens, slew some two hundred of them, and plundered their warehouses. Edward, however, went on to Ghent in company with the Count, and there his Welsh archers became embroiled with the townsfolk, and six hundred of the former, it is said, were slain in a street fight. In the end Edward became disgusted with his Flemish allies, and returned to his own kingdom, after concluding a truce for two years with Philip, and agreeing to marry his son and heir to the Princess Isabella, the "she-wolf of France," an arrangement which received the ready sanction of Boniface VIII. In despair, Guy de Dampierre implored aid from Albert of Austria, the newly-elected Emperor of the West, but all in vain; and by the close of 1298 Flanders had submitted to the King's brother, Charles de Valois, who fixed his residence at Bruges, and strengthened its fortifications.

Relying upon the safe-conduct rashly granted by Charles de Valois, a loyal and chivalrous prince, Guy de Dampierre resolved to throw himself on Philip's

mercy. He was accompanied by his two sons, Robert and William, the latter of whom had married the daughter of Raoul de Nesle, the King's Lieutenant at Bruges. Philip, however, utterly repudiated his brother's safe-conduct, and sent Guy as a prisoner to Compiègne, Robert to Chinon, and William to Issoudun. The barons and knights in attendance upon their Count were consigned to various castles, where they were treated according to the temper and disposition of their keepers. Philip and his queen shortly afterwards made a triumphal progress through Flanders. At Ghent they were received with great demonstrations of enthusiasm, but their entry into Bruges was marked by a chilling silence, though the streets had been profusely decorated, and the pavements and windows were filled with the wives and daughters of the citizens in such splendid apparel as to excite the jealous envy of Joan of Navarre.

The costs of this unwelcome reception proved excessively onerous, and created much angry feeling among the lower classes of the community. At this crisis the Man was called forth by the Hour. One Peter Coninck, an old one-eyed man, a weaver, short of stature, and insignificant in appearance, now came forward to rouse his fellow-townsmen to action. Though poor, and so far unlettered that he knew nothing of the French language, he spoke the vernacular tongue with remarkable force and fluency. He began by boldly accusing the local magistrates of being actuated by selfish motives and a paltry ambition, and in a short time gained over the heads of twenty-five *métiers*, or trade guilds, all of whom were arrested, but

only to be liberated by the people. Raoul de Nesle, whose leniency had endeared him to the Bruges folk, had been succeeded by James de Châtillon, Count of St. Pol, a typical Frenchman, vain, arrogant, and intolerant, and who just then was absent from his post, having accompanied his sovereign to Wynendael, Ypres, and Béthune. No sooner, however, did tidings of the riot reach him than he hastened back at the head of 500 men-at-arms. Halting a little distance from the town, he awaited the tolling of a bell, which was to announce that there was nothing to oppose his entry. As it happened, the citizens had been informed of the preconcerted signal, and at the first sound of the bell ran to arms, chased the magistrates into the Bourg, killed some of them, and made prisoners of the others. Châtillon thereupon patiently awaited the reinforcements with which his brother was rapidly advancing to his aid. A compromise was then effected through the influence of the Leliærs, and it was agreed that all concerned in the disturbance, including the ring-leader, Peter Coninck, should be allowed to quit the town, on condition that they withdrew also from Flanders. The fortifications were demolished, the gates thrown down, the moat filled up, and the municipal rights entirely abrogated. A piteous appeal was sent to the King who, caring nothing now for the Communes, ratified the acts of his officer.

There was consequently a renewal of the only half-appeased agitation. It seems to have been the normal condition of the men of Bruges and Ghent especially, to begin a new commotion almost before its predecessor was suppressed. Nothing could exceed the rashness

with which they entered upon a quarrel, unless it was the fatuity with which they listened to promises never intended to be fulfilled, or accepted terms which were never carried out by either party. On this occasion the tumult was more serious than usual. John de Namur, his brother Guy, and William de Nevers opened communications with their partisans among the burghers and artisans. Peter Coninck, a host in himself, also suddenly reappeared in Bruges, and prevailed upon the people at once to repair the fortifications, and with such enthusiasm was this work undertaken that the King's officers and magistrates thought it prudent to consult their safety by flight.

The movement spread far and wide, and reached even to Ghent, which had hitherto supported Philip in his various contentions with their Count. William de Juliers, Provost of Maestricht, a mere youth, and in Holy Orders, donned a suit of mail-armour, and hurried off to Bruges, where he was welcomed by John Breydel, a man of great wealth and influence, and *doyen*, or *deken*, of the butchers' guild. Damme and the Château of Maele fell an easy prize to the martial ardour of the priestly warrior; but at this juncture the townsfolk of Bruges were seized with one of their inexplicable fits of changeableness, and drove Coninck out of their town. He did not, however, go beyond reach of constant communication with his friends within the walls. A proclamation had been issued enjoining, or permitting, all who had anything to fear from the King's officers to withdraw in peace, and on the following evening 5,000 patriots had thus gathered together at Damme, Ardenburg, and on the

banks of the Zwyn. Among them were presently seen Peter Coninck and John Breydel, giving confidence to the waverers, and inspiring all with their own spirit of enterprise and resolution. On the next day Châtillon rode into Bruges at the head of 1,700 men-at-arms, followed by a multitude of foot soldiers and archers, and refused to listen to any complaints. He had not taken sufficient account, however, of the heroism of free men fighting for their wives and little ones, and for all they held most dear. Before dawn had broken the Ste. Croix Gate was opened to Coninck at the head of one division of the homeless patriots, while Breydel, with his butchers and their friends, boldly forded the moat and mounted the rampart, axe in hand. The watchword was, "Schilt ende Vriendt" (Shields and Friends), a shibboleth which cost the lives of many Frenchmen, who would gladly have passed themselves off for Flemings. Coninck marched straight upon the market-place, while Breydel assaulted Châtillon's house, and compelled the Governor to flee for his life. On that day of revenge and carnage fully 1,500 Frenchmen are believed to have perished before the sun was high. The "Bruges Matins," as the massacre was called, took place on Friday, the 18th May, 1302, and are still commemorated, with excusable fervour, by modern historians.

For a brief space it seemed as if the men of Ghent were about to follow the example of those of Bruges, and rise upon their oppressors, but the ebullition speedily subsided, for Philip was profuse in promises, and an unhappy rivalry nearly always kept apart the two cities, which, cordially united, would have served

as a rallying-point to all Flanders, and might have defied the utmost efforts of the France of those days. The Bruges Matins, however, were better appreciated at Furnes, Dixmude, Nieuport, and Bergues, whose militia swelled the little army with which William de Juliers appeared before Cassel. Early in June Guy de Namur arrived in Bruges, and took upon himself the government in the name of Guy de Dampierre. At the head of a considerable force, estimated at 20,000 men, animated with the determination to conquer or die, he encamped in the plain of Groeninghe under the walls of Courtrai, which was stoutly defended by a brave French knight named De Lens, until threatened with starvation. Apprised of the straits to which this gallant garrison was reduced, the Count of Artois pushed forward from Arras in command of an army largely composed of the flower of the French nobility, attended by their personal retainers. On neither side was much strategy displayed. The Flemings, indeed, masked the hostile citadel of Courtrai, and took the best advantage of the marshy ground in front of their solid squares, as well as of a small stream easily fordable by infantry, but the bed of which was soon trampled into a quagmire by the heavily-weighted cavalry of France. Nor, perhaps, was it in their power to do much more, for, with the exception of Breydel's corps, who carried pole-axes, almost their only weapon was a long pike pointed with steel, called with grim irony a *Goedendag*, or Good-day! So long as their solid squares remained unbroken, these pikes formed an impenetrable *chevaux-de-frise*, but not unfrequently the lances of the French knights were



longer than the goedendags, and whenever that was the case the Flemish militia fell into disorder at the first charge, and were ruthlessly massacred, their pikes being dropped so as not to impede their flight. Under the walls of Courtrai, however, they held their ground with commendable tenacity, and all the more easily that the French men-at-arms committed the same mistakes that were repeated with similar consequences at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Despising their enemy, and reckless of marsh and river, they soon became a disorderly mob. Dashing onward in wild fury, or breaking into separate groups, unable to render each other mutual support, the valiant chivalry of France were felled to the ground like cattle. So great was the slaughter of belted knights, that Flemish chroniclers love to style the 11th July, 1302, as the Day of the Golden Spurs.

The moral effects of the Battle of Courtrai were more remarkable than its political fruits. For the first time the feudal system had broken down on the battle-field. Traders and artisans had overthrown the splendid chivalry of the most warlike nation in Europe. The glamour was dispelled. Knights and barons had no longer a special faculty for winning battles. They could be defeated and slain by ill-armed weavers and butchers, if only these would stand firm and be staunch to one another. It is true the result was not always the same, as we shall presently see in what happened at Cassel, and later on at Roosebeke; but the beginning of the end had been attained, the first step had been taken towards the elevation of the masses. At Toulouse and Bordeaux the citizens claimed their

independence, and expelled the officers and agents of the Crown. The agitation spread even to Italy. Florence was in a state of wild commotion, and a federation was formed by several of the Italian Communes in the North. In Hainault, in the bishopric of Liège, in Brabant, and in Zealand the popular enthusiasm was for a time indescribable. Even Ghent, which had been but poorly represented at Courtrai, threw in its lot with the victorious party.

The first shock of the tidings of this terrible disaster completely unnerved Philip the Fair. He sought an unworthy revenge in abusing his aged captive, Guy de Dampierre, and threw Robert de Béthune for six weeks into a gloomy dungeon of the Castle of Chinon. He then raised a numerous army, and marched towards the Flemish frontier, but at the last moment his courage failed him, and he hastily fell back upon Arras, leaving Flanders in the hands of John de Namur, whose brother Guy was elected Captain of Bruges, a post similar to that which was subsequently confided to the Van Artevelde at Ghent. In August, 1303, was fought the equivocal battle of Mont en Pevele, both sides claiming the victory which fell to neither, and on the 7th March, 1304, died Guy de Dampierre after a rule of unusual length, as disastrous to his people as it was discreditable to himself.

He was succeeded by his son, Robert de Béthune, "the Lion of Flanders" according to Flemish romance-writers, but, in truth, quite as self-seeking as his inconstant father. To obtain his liberty and that of his two brothers, he signed the infamous treaty of Athies-sur-Orge, by which he engaged to pay a heavy fine, to serve



the King with 600 men-at-arms whenever called upon to do so, to destroy the fortifications of his five principal towns, to exile 3,000 citizens of Bruges under the pretext of sending them upon different pilgrimages, and to surrender Cassel and Courtrai as material guarantees. As soon as the terms of this shameful compact came to be known, the Communes expressed a very natural indignation, but Robert, who was now advanced in years, cared only for peace and personal repose. He therefore confirmed the privileges of the Bruges municipality, while secretly in correspondence with the French King. The Communes accused the Count and even John de Namur of being Leliaerds at heart, and their suspicions were strengthened by the action of the Count's bailiffs, who arrested twenty-five of the most notable individuals in the Pays de Waes, of whom several were crucified and the others sent into banishment. The burgher aristocracy, for the most part, sided with the Count, and furnished him with a distinguished escort on his return to Paris, where, early in 1308, they ratified the treaty of Athies in the name of the Communes, though Bruges was not represented. The Count thereupon despatched his son, Robert de Cassel, to announce to the Communes the ratification of the treaty, which the rich burghers generally were willing to accept. Not so the working-men, who denounced it as a "Pact of Iniquity," and awaited their time for a more active expression of their disapproval. The townsmen of Bruges alone refused their assent, but were finally induced to despatch eight delegates to Paris. Philip then made some handsome concessions. He reduced the fine, sanctioned the

retention of the fortifications, agreed to levy no taxes in Flanders, and waived his claim to Cassel and Courtrai.

It seemed, however, as though fate had decreed that the King of France and his most powerful vassal should always be at strife. When it became apparent that neither the Count nor his Communes had any serious intention of executing the Treaty of Athies, Philip seized the revenues of the counties of Nevers and Réthel, which belonged to Robert's son, Louis de Nevers. That ambitious and dissolute prince straightway urged his father to resist the encroachments of Philip, and succeeded so well that the Count was cited to appear before the Royal Court in Paris. The King at the same time assured the Communes that all their troubles originated in the selfishness of their Counts, and promised many favours to those who adhered to his interests, while threatening his enemies with wrath and tribulation. He had the good fortune to get possession of the sons of Louis de Nevers, who at once proceeded to Paris to obtain their release. He himself was thrown into prison, charged with seditious practices, and so evilly entreated that his spirit was quite broken.

By the Treaty of Pontoise, July 11, 1312, Robert de Béthune consented to cede Lille, Douai, and Béthune as security for the due payment of the fine—Enguerrand de Marigny promising in the King's name to return them immediately. The Count further pledged himself to dismantle all the strong places in Flanders, to appoint as magistrates only those who were known to be well disposed towards

France, and to inflict punishment not only upon rebels but upon all who should excite disaffection in their neighbours. Under the impulse of a transitory fit of energy, Louis de Nevers now escaped from prison and fled to Ghent. Refusing to obey the summons to return within six weeks, he was declared contumacious and deprived of all his rights and expectations. He thereupon appealed to the Pope and the Emperor of the West, neither of whom showed any inclination to be drawn into a quarrel with France.

In the meantime Edward II. had ascended the throne of England, and, in an evil hour, had married Isabella of France. On the 19th June, 1313, he ordered the arrest of all Flemish merchants in England, excepting inhabitants of Ypres, and so terrified the Communes with the apprehension of the loss of their wool supply that they yielded to Philip at all points. In the following year Philip sent his serjeants into Flanders to arrest Louis de Nevers, but the Communes rushed to arms in defence of their municipal privileges, and drove the King's bailiff from Courtrai. Four French armies were speedily organised and marched towards the frontiers, when Enguerrand de Marigny, in a moment of panic, stopped their advance and signed a truce. A more formidable enemy than Flanders had to be subdued or cajoled. The French nobles and townsfolk, exasperated by Philip's never-ceasing exactions, had at length protested against his tyranny, and threatened to take up arms in their self-defence. Philip surrendered at discretion, revoked all his *maltôtes* and unjust imposts, and on the 29th November, 1314, was gathered to his fathers.

## CHAPTER IV.

Louis X. invades Flanders—Panic in his Army—Philip the Long—Pope arbitrates between France and Flanders—Robert de Béthune at Paris—His death—Charles the Fair—Louis de Crécy—Arrests English Traders in Flanders—Disturbances—Nicolas Zannequin—Louis de Crécy made prisoner in Courtrai—Interdict against Ghent—Peace between Count and Communes—Philip de Valois—Promises to restore Count of Flanders—Battle of Cassel—Punishment of the Insurgents—Insurrection in Maritime Flanders—Birth of Louis de Maele—Temporary lull.

LOUIS X., surnamed *le Hutin*, began his reign on what would now be called liberal principles. He professed great regard for justice, and set himself against corruption and malversation. The evil-minded counsellors of Philip the Fair were disgraced and punished, and Enguerrand de Marigny was actually suspended from the gallows. For all that, Louis X. was not a whit wiser or more reasonable than his predecessors. Louis de Nevers, having repaired to Paris, was completely won over to the Royal interests, and ever after hung about the French Court. His aged father, Robert de Béthune, had in vain pleaded his growing infirmities as an excuse for his omission to proceed to Paris to take his oath of allegiance to the new monarch, and was pronounced guilty of contumacy. Throwing off the mask, the

French King forbade the exportation from France to Flanders of all articles of food, and announced his intention of starving the Communes into submission, with the alternative of being exterminated by the sword. To carry out these fierce threats, he placed himself at the head of a formidable army, and at last pitched his camp on the plain of Groeninghe, already so fatal to the chivalry of France. His further progress was stopped by torrential rains, which made the roads impassable. His gallant array was seized with a panic, and, abandoning their tents, the host broke up in confusion, and took to a disorderly flight. The King himself sought refuge within the walls of Tournai, but the gates were shut against him and his followers. As the day was closing, a solitary fugitive, exhausted and wayworn, begged and obtained shelter from the monks of St. Martin's Abbey, and was recognised as Louis X., that morning the commander of a great army, which, in a few hours, had melted away without discharge of bolt or arrow, without a spear-thrust or sword-cut. A truce was proclaimed till the 22nd of July, 1316, and, before it had quite expired, Louis X. died almost suddenly at Vincennes.

The deceased monarch left a daughter by his first wife, Margaret of Burgundy; but by the Salic Law the throne of France, it was thought, could not be filled by a female. The Queen, however, was believed to be pregnant, and in the meantime Philip the Long, Count of Poitiers, was appointed Regent of the realm. One of his first acts was to prolong the truce with Flanders, and in the end he succeeded in imposing excessively

severe terms, which were never executed. The Queen was delivered of a princess, who survived only a few days, so that Philip the Long, after a brief though vehement dispute with the Duke of Burgundy, became King of France, and received the homage of Louis de Nevers. Through the interposition of the Ambassadors of England, Castile, Aragon, and Portugal, the long-pending differences between France and Flanders were now submitted to the arbitration of the Pope. The Papal decision seems to have been entirely equitable. His Holiness enjoined Philip to pledge himself by oath to the observance of existing treaties, and that his successors should likewise do so, on the day following that on which the Counts of Flanders rendered due homage to their suzerain. In the event of the capricious violation of this oath, the Peers of France were absolved from their obligation to follow the King to the field, while the Flemings, on their part, were threatened with an interdict if they hesitated to act up to those treaties. Above all, the princes of Christendom were exhorted to lay aside their mutual jealousies, and unite in a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land.

With all their real influence, the Popes seldom succeeded in securing the acceptance of their arbitrations unless one of the two parties was strong enough to compel the acquiescence of the other. In the present instance Robert de Béthune obstinately refused to go to Paris, bearing in mind all that he and his family had endured through the treachery of Philip the Fair. The King's Chaplain thereupon declared that it was as meritorious to bear arms



against the Flemings as against the Saracens, and issued an interdict against the County. The Pope again intervened, not being disposed to adopt the equivalent proposed by the French priest, and sent three members of religious orders to bring the people of Flanders to a better frame of mind. Their exhortations proving fruitless, Philip threatened coercive measures, though for various reasons he found it preferable to agree to a Conference at Compiègne on the 7th October, 1318, but which produced no tangible results.

Throughout these negotiations Louis de Nevers played a most unworthy part. He did his best to betray the cause of the Communes, who would have laid down their lives in his defence. He would even have betrayed his own father had the aged prince placed in him sufficient confidence to give him an opportunity. So deeply rooted was Robert de Béthune's distrust of the French character that he even broke the solèmn promise he had made to Cardinal Gosselin that he would visit the Court in Mid-Lent; but in 1320 he was constrained to accompany the deputies despatched thither by the Communes. The King met him outside the walls of Paris, and received him with much courtesy and honour. The oath of fealty was read aloud by Louis de Nevers and repeated by the unfortunate Count, but beyond that point he would not move. When the treaty of the 1st September, 1316, was produced for his signature, he positively refused to surrender the towns of Lille, Douai, and Béthune, except as a mere formality, and on that same night he secretly



started off for Flanders. He was overtaken, however, by the deputies, and constrained to affix his signature. A little later he was with difficulty prevented from beheading his son, Louis de Nevers, who humbled himself exceedingly to obtain forgiveness, and on being liberated retired to Paris, where he died on the 6th July, 1322. On the 17th of the following September he was followed by his father at the ripe old age of 82. According to common rumour both deaths were attributable to poison, though no plausible reason has ever been assigned for the vulgar belief.

Under Charles the Fair, who succeeded Philip the Long, Philip de Cassel urged his claims to the Earldom of Flanders as a son of Robert de Béthune, but he had made himself odious to the Communes, though supported by a majority of the feudal aristocracy. His friends, indeed, were so powerful, that the King referred the question to the Court of Peers. The burghers of Bruges and Ghent, however, anticipated their decision by recognising as their Count the son of Louis de Nevers, who during his lifetime was also known by that title, though after his death in the slaughter at Crécy, he was more commonly called Louis de Crécy, by which name, to avoid confusion, he will henceforth be described in this narrative. The King, indignant at the presumption of the Communes, threw the young Count into prison, and detained him for a couple of months in the Tower of the Louvre. But the Flemings held out with more than their usual obstinacy, and on the 29th January, 1323, the Court of Peers ratified their election.

Much cannot be said in favour of their judgment

beyond the support it afforded to the pretensions of hereditary descent. The new Count, from the commencement of his agitated rule, showed small respect for the wishes of the Communes. One of his earliest proceedings was to fit out some ships for the purpose of making descents upon the coast of England, and to arrest all English traders found within his territories. The Communes naturally took alarm at a policy that threatened to deprive them of the raw material indispensable to their industrial prosperity, and in the hope of tranquilising them, Charles the Fair bestirred himself, not in vain, to re-establish commercial relations between Flanders and the adjacent counties of Hainault and Holland. On his part Louis de Crécy laboured strenuously to efface all umbrage from the mind of his uncle Robert de Cassel, while he bestowed on John de Namur all the dues and customs collected at Sluys, which had previously belonged to Bruges and Damme. Though the first to acclaim Louis as their lawful Count, the men of Bruges were little disposed to suffer loss at his hands. They accordingly hastened to Sluys, made John de Namur their prisoner, and shut him up in the Steen, whence he effected his escape after three months' detention. The Count had prudently fled to Paris, but was persuaded to return by the men of Ghent, who seldom lost an opportunity of doing mischief to their Bruges rivals and competitors.

It was in December, 1323, that Louis again made his entry into Bruges, and allowed himself to be guided by the pernicious counsels of William Flotte, son of the notorious Peter Flotte, Philip the

Fair's Chancellor, who fell at Courtrai. He himself resided chiefly in his own county of Nevers, delighting in low pastimes and in the society of unworthy associates, while the government of Flanders was virtually conducted by the Sire d'Aspremont, a French Knight, destitute of any special ability, and overweening in his contempt of traders and artizans. The conduct of the Leliaerds in the rural districts became intolerable, and brought about an insurrection of the untamed inhabitants of maritime Flanders, who, under their leader, James Peyt, wrecked and burnt the châteaux of the feudal lords. After a while these disturbances were quelled, and the insurgents even paid the fine that was imposed upon them, but preserved their organisation and watched events. The Count, indeed, withdrew the Sire d'Aspremont, and nominated in his stead a member of the Ghent commercial aristocracy, named Philip d'Axel. The country, however, still remained in a very disturbed condition, in a great degree through Louis' propensity to consult individuals quite incompetent to deal with affairs of State.

At that time there resided in Bruges a rich burgher of Furnes, Nicholas Zannequin by name, a sturdy patriot, and possessed of great local influence. Roused by his denunciations of the tyranny practised by the Leliaerds, the neighbouring Communes took up arms, and daily drew together the disaffected from all parts. Robert de Cassel retreated at their approach, not without being suspected of sympathising with the movement. The citizens of Ghent even wavered for a brief space in their allegiance, but finally rallied to the Count, who vented his impotent fury in re-

voking the liberties of Bruges, though he dared not approach the town. Feeling his inability to suppress the insurrection by force, and hoping everything from time, Louis proposed a treaty with his revolted subjects, leaving to arbitration the adjustment of the damages sustained by Leliaerds and Klauwaerds. At this crisis Robert de Cassel no longer judged it necessary to conceal his friendly disposition towards the insurgents, and so openly did he display his sentiments that his nephew determined to assassinate him. He received timely warning, however, from Louis' Chancellor, who expressed himself anxious to "save the honour of the Count of Flanders from shame, and his soul from God's judgment."

Raising a body of 400 men-at-arms, Louis de Crécy took heart to arrest six burghers of Bruges who chanced to be in Courtrai. No sooner did the tidings reach their native place than 5000 of their fellow-citizens marched to liberate them. To delay their arrival the Count broke down the bridge over the Lys, and fired the suburbs on the further side of the river. The wind, however, drove the blazing sparks upon the thatched roofs of the town, and many houses were reduced to ashes. At such a moment, when the people of Courtrai were in terror and despair, the Count was sufficiently rash or fatuous to ride into the market-place, dragging along with him his six prisoners. By a sudden impulse the men of Courtrai flung themselves upon Louis and his companions, slew many knights and nobles, and handed him over to the mercy of the Bruges militia, who just then made their appearance. The Count was placed on a sorry steed and led

away a prisoner. His counsellors were thrown into chains, and subsequently condemned to death. They were accordingly pitched out of the prison windows into the street and murdered by the populace. This tragedy was enacted on the 21st June, 1325,—the Count being held in safe custody in the Halles.

Robert de Cassel, being chosen Rewaert, or Captain General, of Flanders, though only by Bruges and a few of the lesser Communes, conducted an expedition against Ghent, and encountered the militia of that town at Deynze. For a time victory seemed to favour the latter, but in the end they broke, and were hotly pursued to the foot of their ramparts. Charles the Fair now thought it incumbent upon him to interpose his good offices, which, however, were very ungraciously received by the insurgents. The Count of Namur, who was marching to Ghent, to the assistance of Louis de Crécy, sustained a defeat at the hands of the people of Grammont; but, on the other side, the weavers of Ghent were severely cut up by the men-at-arms, and 3000 of their number driven into exile—to swell the ranks of the disaffected. As might have been expected, Robert de Cassel refused obedience to the Royal summons to repair to Paris to render an account of his conduct, and little was gained by the King's appointment of John de Namur to the post of Rewaert at the request of the citizens of Ghent. A more potent instrument of coercion was exercised by the Bishop of Senlis and the Abbot of St. Denis, who proceeded respectively to Tournai and Arras, and hurled a sentence of excommunication against the recalcitrant Communes. A great

terror now fell upon the town of Bruges, augmented by an adverse encounter with the Ghent militia under the command of Sohier de Courtrai and Hector Vilain. The former of these two leaders was father-in-law of James van Arteveld, and will again be heard of at a later date.

Charles the Fair at length perceived the necessity of summoning the Barons of France to the Royal Standard, with the usual effect of bringing about a more pacific tendency in the Bruges people. Peace was accordingly concluded on the 18th February, 1326, and was ratified in the most sacred manner by the Count, who went in state to the Chapel of St. Basil and swore on the revered relic of the Holy Blood to grant an universal amnesty. On the following day he rode to Ghent, and thence travelled to Paris, where he readily obtained from the King the promise of a sufficient force to suppress all further attempts at agitation. For the moment, however, Charles was fully occupied with the distressed condition of his sister Isabella, Queen of England, and his death on the 1st February, 1327, deprived Louis de Crécy of all hope of assistance from that quarter for some time to come.

The recognition of Philip de Valois as successor to Charles the Fair met with considerable opposition from the French Communes, relying upon the sympathy of the industrial population of Flanders. According to the Salic Law, indeed, there was little to choose between the pretensions of Philip de Valois and Edward of England, the former being the nephew, the latter the grandson of Philip the Fair. The former,



however, was a thorough Frenchman, while the latter was as much an Englishman as was George III. in the last century. Besides, Philip was consecrated King of France in the Cathedral of Rheims on the 29th May, 1328, while Edward III. was yet a lad of seventeen, with probably no higher ambition than to confirm his seat on the English throne, unless it were to add Scotland to the lands already beneath his sway. However that may be, no formal protest against the coronation of Philip was made in his name.

At that august ceremony the Count of Flanders should have borne the Sword of the Realm, but, though thrice summoned by the heralds to come forth and do his duty, he moved not from his place. In real, or feigned, surprise Philip called upon him for an explanation of his strange conduct. He replied that it was the Count of Flanders and not Louis de Nevers who had been summoned by the heralds. "What!" exclaimed the king, "are you not the Count of Flanders?" Louis made answer: "Sire, it is true that I bear the name, but I do not possess the authority. The burghers of Bruges, Ypres, Poperinghe, and Cassel have driven me out of my lands, and it is only in the town of Ghent that I dare show myself." "Fair Cousin," said the king, "we swear to you by the holy oil that has this day been poured upon our head that we will not return to Paris until we have established you in peaceful possession of the county of Flanders." The rashness of this chivalrous undertaking was so apparent that the barons and great lords remonstrated with the king, but all to such little purpose that they were commanded to appear with



their respective contingents at Arras at an early date.

True to the shifty, selfish, unstable character of his race, Robert de Cassel now abandoned the cause of the Communes, and offered, with 200 men-at-arms, to hold St. Omer for the king. At the head of an immense army Philip took the road to Courtrai, but suddenly turning to the left he crossed the Neuf-Fossé near Boezeghem, and encamped at the foot of Mount Cassel, which was held by Nicholas Zannequin and 12,000 Flemish pikemen. The position was inaccessible to heavy cavalry, and the French infantry were foiled in every attempt to gain a footing. After waiting for three days in the hope of discovering a vulnerable point, Philip moved his camp to another side of the hill, whence he threatened the towns of Bergues, Wormhout, and Bourbourg. He also charged Robert de Cassel with the ungrateful mission of plundering and laying waste the fertile champaign country all around. The Flemings, however, remained immovable, though exasperated well-nigh to madness by the sad spectacle of burning villages and hamlets, their own homes and the homesteads of their kinsmen. So matters stood in the afternoon of St. Bartholomew's day, August 24, 1328, when Zannequin's endurance was exhausted, and his judgment deserted him. Expecting nothing less than an attack from the Flemish boors, the French knights had taken off their armour, and were sitting or reclining in their tents, playing at chess or dice, when a tremendous commotion was heard without, and their varlets rushed in with the intelligence that the enemy

was upon them. Dividing his men into three nearly equal bodies, Zannequin had given the signal for an onslaught on the French camp: charging down hill with irresistible fury, the Flemings at first overthrew all who strove to bar their further progress. Already Zannequin was within sight of the royal tent and was pressing eagerly onwards, when the king's chaplain dashed in, and with terror in look and voice, bade Philip flee for his life. "*Propos de clerc qui à peur!*"—babble of a frightened priest!—the king exclaimed; but the warning came barely in time to save him from death or captivity. The success of the Flemings, however, was but short-lived. Breathless from their unwonted exertions, outnumbered, and encumbered by their heavy pikes, they were speedily brought to a standstill, while the King of Bohemia, the Count of Hainault, and Robert de Cassel quickly gathered together their retainers and rallied round their over-lord. The Flemings stood firm, shoulder to shoulder, and with their long pikes held the French at bay for a brief space. The knights' lances, however, were longer and more manageable than the clumsy "*goedendags*," and wherever a breach was effected, sword and battle-axe wrought a fearful carnage. In less than two hours Zannequin and his twelve thousand brave associates lay on the field, heaped one over the other, all dead or dying men, and not one breathing a word of surrender. The town of Cassel was committed to the flames, and the French marched into Ypres while the artisans were at strife with their magistrates.

Shortly afterwards Philip returned to his own ter-

ritories, dragging in his train 1500 hostages from Bruges and Ypres. His parting words to Louis de Crécy were a menace as well as a counsel. He bade the Count govern his subjects with justice, for if ever he had to come back to Flanders it would be for his own benefit. About justice Louis cared very little, but he had no idea of being ousted from his pleasant possessions. Conciliation and sincerity being foreign to his nature he had recourse to violence, and is reported to have put 10,000 of his reputed enemies to death within three months. The town of Bruges was divided into six sections, each of which was subjected to a searching investigation. The condemned and the strongly-suspected were marched out to Damme, where the rack and the gallows awaited them. The trade corporations of Ypres were literally decimated. Several men of local distinction were broken upon the wheel. The most atrocious case, perhaps, was that of William Dedeken, formerly burgomaster of Bruges, who had fled to Brabant as to a sure asylum. He was, however, basely given up by the Duke to the King's officers, by whom he was conveyed to Paris, where, after his hands had been chopped off at the wrist, he was placed in the pillory and subsequently bound on the wheel. On the next day his limbs were attached to four horses, which, pulling in different directions, tore them out of their sockets, and his ghastly remains were suspended from the gibbets on Montfaucon.

But Louis thirsted for gold more than for blood. Of the spoils of the slain at Cassel the king demanded two-thirds, leaving one-third to be divided between the Count and his uncle Robert. The towns that

furnished contingents to Zannequin's hapless force were fined so ruthlessly that the Klauwaerds were reduced to poverty, and at Bruges the Count bestowed fine houses upon his barber, his grooms, and valets. The burghers of that town had to go on their knees the latter half of the two long miles' journey to Maele, to implore his mercy. At Ypres the belfry bell was broken, an act held to indicate the cancelment of all charters and deeds of grace, and the fortifications of Bruges, Ypres, and Courtrai were completely demolished. The country was silenced, if not pacified, when suddenly a rumour spread abroad that Sohier Janssone had landed near Ostend with a band of 200 exiles. The people of the coast, untaught by misfortune, flocked to his banner, and the patriots boldly advanced upon Bruges. The Count's bailiff, however, was a man of action. Without waiting for the militia, and possibly distrusting them, he set out with a strong escort of knights and fell upon the insurgents while weary with their march. The greater number were put to the sword, but Janssone, his son, and a score of their comrades, were led away prisoners to Bruges. There they were conducted through the streets in a state of nudity, burnt with a hot iron in every square or market place, broken on the wheel, and beheaded, and their lifeless remains attached to lofty gallows.

During this incident Louis was absent in France. He had gone to Paris to bring to Maele his wife Margaret of France, to whom he had been married eight years, but who had early fled from his ill-treatment. Margaret consented to accompany him to

Bruges, and on the 25th November, 1330, gave birth to a son, named Louis de Maele, who was fated to be the last Count of Flanders. In that same year Louis banished from Ghent many of those whom he believed to be unfavourable to his interests, and in 1333 he confiscated many rich estates. Two years later the Bishop of Tournai succeeded in arranging certain differences between the Count and the magistrates of Ghent, but a new phase of their mutual relations was at hand, as yet unsuspected by either. At Bruges, too, the Breydels reappeared, and public succour was voted to the widow of Peter Coninck. It is probable, however, that no material change in the condition of Flanders would have come to pass, had there not suddenly entered upon the scene a new actor in the person of Edward III. of England.



## PART II.



A SOCIAL VIEW OF FLANDERS IN THE  
XIVTH CENTURY.





## PART II.

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#### CHAPTER V.

Rise of the Democracy—Decline of Feudalism—Municipal Liberties—Growth of the Communes—Local Government—Magistrates—Position of the Count—The Clergy—Military Service—The Artisans—Trade Regulations—Trade Guilds—Sufferings of the Working Classes.

PROPERLY to understand the two episodes represented by the name of Van Arteveld, it is necessary to form a definite idea of the social system which prevailed in Flanders during the fourteenth century, essentially a period of transition. Towards the close of the previous century the commercial and industrial classes had established themselves as a power in the land. Impoverished by the crusades and by their costly passion for tournaments and pageants, the nobles had been compelled to cede important rights and franchises to the inhabitants of towns, in order to obtain money to cover their wasteful expenditure. For a while the civic population were somewhat distressed by the great efforts they had to make to supply the prodigality of their feudal lords, but by means of thrift and self-denial they were speedily enabled to master the momentary embarrassment, and gradually

became enriched by the monopolies they had acquired. Municipal governments were formed on principles which argued the possession and appreciation of political freedom, though it must be confessed that the guilds were characterised by some of the worst features of trades-unions. In the infancy of trade and manufactures it was natural to seek exclusive privileges, to the prejudice of consumers even more than of possible rivals and competitors. The feudal, or territorial, aristocracy soon took umbrage at the growing power and independence of the Communes, and assiduously strove to foster the mutual jealousies of commercial communities, and under various pretexts to recall, or encroach upon, the liberties wrung from their former necessities. The annals of the fourteenth century are little else than the record of a continuous struggle for supremacy between the Crown, the Nobility, and the Democracy. Exasperated by their virtual eclipse behind the practically irresponsible autocracy of their great vassals, more than one of the French Kings had sought to emerge from their comparative obscurity by seeming to make common cause with the Communes, though always prepared at a convenient moment to overthrow the ladder by means of which they had attained the desired object.

The great battles of Courtrai, Crécy, and Poitiers favoured the Royal pretensions by illustrating the inability of the feudal chivalry to cope with a stout yeomanry bravely led and skilfully handled. At the same time the over-lord was not long in making the discovery that the democratic element was still more dangerous and intractable than the military

aristocracy, weakened by personal squabbles, and seldom heartily united for a common purpose. It must also be acknowledged that the frequent excesses to which the Communes yielded in the hour of triumph discredited the name of liberty and shocked the conscience of humanity even in the very rudimentary condition in which it then existed. In the words of Hallam, "Liberty never wore a more unamiable countenance than among these burghers, who abused the strength she gave them by cruelty and insolence." That, however, is only partially true, for it is but just to remember that "these burghers" were never fully in possession of the liberty they coveted. Their excesses were, in fact, reprisals for the atrocities practised upon themselves. Their position was never assured. They were engaged throughout in a fierce contest with brutal power brutally exercised, and they acted after the fashion of the age in which they lived. Be that as it may, liberal institutions were reduced to a hopeless condition at the end of the fourteenth century, while feudalism had received its death blow, and the relations between monarchs and their great vassals were rapidly taking the form most strongly accentuated in the reigns of Louis XI., Louis XIII., and Louis XIV.

The feudal spirit was never so strong in Flanders as in France. The artisans, though not personally eligible for the municipal offices which were filled in obedience to their votes, exercised immense local influence, and not unfrequently drove their Count into exile, together with such of their magistrates as were suspected of undue bias in his favour. It is worthy,

however, of remark that not only were the burgomaster and the *échevins* chosen from the ranks of the wealthy commercial aristocracy, but even the *doyens* or *deken*s of guilds were usually taken from the *poorters*, or burghers who had retired from business—perhaps in a previous generation. It was thus more difficult for the military aristocracy to coerce, or intimidate, the operative classes, so long as the popular leaders were true to those whom they represented, and had not suffered themselves to be cajoled by courtly influences. Unhappily, the Communes were usually at strife with the rural population, because the wretched villagers occasionally offered for sale the cloth they might have wrought in excess of their own humble wants—a practice directly opposed to the monopoly secured to the “good towns” by charter from King or Count. As Mr. Kirk justly remarks, in his “History of Charles the Bold”—“in the Middle Ages freedom was nowhere claimed as a natural right, or regarded as the common property of any nation. Its existence was an artificial one. It was confined to a narrow range. It seldom breathed the air of the hills or the open fields, but was a denizen of the city, surrounding itself with strong walls, wearing a gold chain and gown of office, and holding in its hand the charters from which it derived its origin, and which contained the measure of its powers.” These very charters were purchased, or in some other way wrung from the need of the sovereign, or the immediate lord, and were continually cancelled, or modified, after the suppression of the frequent insurrections which constituted the protest of the weak against the tyranny and oppression of

the powerful. As already stated, the Flemish territorial nobles were generally on the French side—even against their own Count—for the sake of the honours, distinctions, and grants of land which monarchs in those days lavished at their own caprice upon those who served them without scruple. Not a few even of the burgher aristocracy favoured the enemies of their country, and thought less of patriotism than of royal patronage.

According to Professor Vanderkindere, the fourteenth century was chiefly distinguished by the preponderance acquired by the great Communes. The nobility were thrown into the background; the Count was powerful and respected only so long as he acted in concert with them; while the rural population laboured and suffered, and were looked upon as little removed above a servile condition. In the beginning it had been necessary to possess a plot of land and a dwelling to become entitled to the benefits of a corporation. These heritable burghers continued to enjoy special advantages so late as the fourteenth century. They constituted the nucleus of the *poortery*, which consisted of the great burghers who, for the most part, had ceased to take an active part in the management of a business. Actual residence in the town was indispensable, and the duration of absence was precisely regulated. The Commune rested on a threefold base—territorial, juridical, and economic. The property held in common was the original bond of union that kept together all the individual proprietors, whose identity of interests pledged them to mutual defence and indemnification. The election of com-

munal magistrates and administrators grew naturally out of this obligation to afford mutual aid to one another, and this essential principle of communal existence endured unto the end. The rural and territorial germ was not long in developing itself into an organised society governed by charters, or *keures*, administered by magistrates endowed with judicial as well as with administrative powers, so that a Commune might be defined as "a group of individuals established on a territory in which they exercise rights in common, and where they have to answer for their conduct only before their own tribunal." At first, it was an asylum rather than a power. Villages had not yet grown into towns. Industry was strictly local. Commerce had not begun its beneficial mission of exchanging the products of different localities one against the other. A circulating medium can hardly be said to have existed. It was not until the eleventh century that any movement towards the enlargement of social relations became perceptible, but in the course of the next hundred years a notable and abiding progress was made. With improved security to person and property, markets sprang up in many places. Travelling and transport became comparatively safe, and consequently a more sustained intercourse arose between distant points of the territory, round which gathered an aggregation of producers and traders, so that adjacent hamlets gradually merged into considerable towns.

Equality and fraternity, of course, disappeared with the advance of civilisation. The rich *poorters* aimed at the exclusive direction of the affairs of the town or



State, just as the more wealthy tradesmen and merchants sought to monopolise the regulation of industry. To obtain a share in the municipal government, it was no longer necessary to possess a plot of land, much less a landed estate. It was enough to be rich, prosperous, and influential in one's own guild. The *deken* or *doyen* of a guild was a person of importance, whose favour it was worth while to conciliate, though a good deal depended upon the relative strength and opulence of the particular guild. On the creation of the Hanse of London, in the thirteenth century, the local guilds gained immense power by their association under that collective name. This power, indeed, was rather of a defensive than an aggressive character. Though always ready to quarrel among themselves, the "good towns" were averse from foreign war, and clung to peace with a tenacity that was not unfrequently ignoble. They gained, however, what they coveted. They obtained the recognition of the rights of labour. They were guaranteed, not always efficiently, against arbitrary imposts at the caprice of the Count or his representatives. Servitude under every form or pretext was absolutely abolished, trial by ordeal disappeared, and the independence of the local tribunals was generally acknowledged. The duties on export, import, and transit were temporarily removed, and the claim of levying new taxes was waived, if not actually renounced.

At the close of the thirteenth century the *poorters*, if not lineally descended from the free men of former times, who, in virtue of their landed property, were alone eligible to the magistracy, at least realised all the

advantages of such a position, and were distinguished by the escutcheon over the door of their house, and which was engraved on the seal that attested their signature to important deeds. By degrees some of these families usurped hereditary privileges, and were known as "Geslachten" or "Lignages," though more prominently in Brabant than in Flanders, where they called themselves *ledechangers*, lazy-goers, or persons retired from business. One of their privileges was to serve on horseback, otherwise the exclusive appanage of knights and nobles. But their withdrawal from commercial activity was fatal to their popularity, the more so that they were commonly suspected of being Leliaerds, and it is certain that from among them were taken "The Thirty-nine," who so long governed the town of Ghent. In the other towns of Flanders proper the *échevins* or *Scepenen* held office only for twelve months, though eligible for re-election after intervals of three years. As their tenure of power drew to a close they nominated a certain number of candidates, from whom the Count, or his delegate, chose their successors. Virtually, the burgher aristocracy kept the administration in their own hands. Associated with them were inferior functionaries indifferently known as *coremanni*, *coratores*, or *Jurés*, whose duties have not been very clearly defined, and whose influence waxed or waned in various places according to circumstances, or the personal character of themselves and the *échevins* to whom they were nominally subordinated. The chief officer of the Commune was styled the Burgomaster, though his office appears to have been rather honorary than sub-

stantial. At Ghent, in default of an actual Burgo-master, the first *échevin*—*de eerste scepen*—answered the purpose, while at Bruges and many minor towns there were two communal chiefs—*magistri communie* or *rectores civitatis*—who probably represented, the one the *échevins*, the other the *jurés*, or associated councillors. Briefly, then, as Professor Vanderkindere clearly indicates, the organisation of the aristocratic Commune was founded on the maintenance of the preponderant influence of the *lignages*, the *viri probi*, the heritable burghers, the great leaders of the guilds, while the artisans and common folk were practically denied a voice in the management of their own public affairs. By the beginning, however, of the fourteenth century the democratic element had begun to make itself felt, and to foreshadow the two remarkable episodes which this little volume is intended to illustrate.

Personal and commercial liberty as understood in Flanders in the Middle Ages might almost be summed up in two guarantees, one of which secured a fair trial before the local magistrates, while the other forbade the imposition of dues and charges likely to interfere with the extension and profits of trade. A *poorter* could not be brought before any Court whose competence he might think proper to challenge. It was also the duty of the municipal magistrates to take heed that no member of the Commune was subjected to unjust treatment in any other land or city. The local tribunal was further supposed to be entirely independent of Count or King, and to possess extraordinary powers for insuring justice to the humblest member of the Commune. In reality all this was

at least mythical, though modern writers may find a pleasure in exaggerating the extent of the civic independence enjoyed in those days. It is, of course, possible that during the frequent, but brief, obscurations of the power of the Count or his over-lord, the Communes may have blustered somewhat loudly, and it is undeniable that great privileges were conferred, both in charters, and by word of mouth, but it is extremely improbable that the influence of local magistrates ever extended much beyond the walls of their town, or, except on rare occasions, came into collision with the Count's representatives without experiencing the fate of the earthen pipkin that was dashed against the iron pot. For example, the Communal magistrates claimed, and abused, the right of banishing political partisans holding opinions contrary to their own, but no sooner was the Count's authority restored than the exiles were recalled and usually indemnified at the cost of their momentarily successful opponents. No doubt, while negotiations were still going on, the Count promised whatever was asked of him, but, once more at his ease, he recanted "vows made in pain, as violent and void." On the other hand the legislative functions of the *échevins* were faithfully and usefully discharged, and there can be no question that they placed a strong restraint upon the tyrannical impulses of their feudal superiors. The police regulations were entirely within their province, and it was by their constant supervision that the *pax civitatis* was maintained. Fairs and markets, and the manifold details of the commercial organisation, were also within the competence of the local

magistrates, though the sanction of the Count was in many cases indispensable. To them likewise belonged the construction and maintenance of public buildings, such as town halls, belfries, bridges, canals, and so forth. The direction of education, however, was vested in the clergy, with the inevitable effect of warping the judgment, narrowing the exercise of the intellectual powers, and prohibiting the critical faculties. In some respects, however, the clergy were subjected to wholesome restraints. In Ghent they were compelled to pay taxes like the laity, and everywhere they were forbidden to lay in larger supplies of wine and other articles of merchandise than were wanted for their own use, and which they obtained free of duty.

Education apart, so extensive was the influence of the Communal magistrates, that members of the territorial nobility were ambitious of being associated with them in an honorary way under the title of *buyten-poorters* or *haghe-poorters*, that is, *bourgeois forains*—outer-burghers. Against a foreign enemy every citizen capable of bearing arms was bound to follow the Count to the field. In the event of offensive warfare, however, the Count could summon to his banner only his own immediate vassals and retainers. If any of the burghers consented to accompany him, it was entirely a voluntary act, and in no way committed the Commune. Not that the Flemish townsfolk were averse from warlike enterprises on their own account. The chief towns were continually at strife with one another, and not unfrequently they would bring to reason a territorial magnate who might have infringed

their privileges, or been guilty of wrong-doing towards a member of the Commune. At other times their martial prowess was displayed on less excusable grounds, as when they punished a village for encroaching upon a monopoly, by destroying all the looms it contained, and even by demolishing the houses of obnoxious individuals, and in case of resistance putting them to death.

Towns were surrounded by walls, ramparts, and moats, and were entered through massive gates, sometimes furnished with portcullis and drawbridge, and guarded by the civic militia. The possession of fortifications was, however, hotly contested by the French Kings, who availed themselves of every success to enjoin their demolition and prohibit their reconstruction. The streets were usually tortuous, to lessen the advantages of archers and cross-bowmen, and very many houses boasted of a circular tower, the upper floor of which, accessible only by a ladder, afforded a temporary retreat to the household when pursued by a victorious enemy, whether foreigners or members of a rival guild. The communal militia consisted of horse and foot. The cavalry was the exclusive privilege of the commercial nobility, supplemented by such of the neighbouring knights and barons as had been enregistered among the *buyten poorters*. This arm of the service was always numerically weak, and totally unfit to cope with the French men-at-arms. No citizen could join this aristocratic corps unless his yearly income exceeded 300 livres. The infantry comprised the whole body of townsmen capable of military service, and heavy fines—some-



times confiscation of their whole property—awaited those who evaded this first duty of a citizen. Towns were divided into sections, each of which was placed under its own captain, or *hoofman*, and these, again, while engaged on active service, received their orders from a captain-general, or *beleeder van de stad*. At Ghent this important personage was attended by an escort, or body-guard, distinguished by their white hoods, to which is partly due the total misconception of James van Arteveld's political position evinced by Jehan le Bel, and still more so by his amplifier, the Canon of Chimay. Wielding a military force, the Communes gradually assumed the right to form alliances, not only with one another, but even with foreign States and Princes. This assumption was tacitly condoned by the Counts of Flanders, the Dukes of Brabant, and other petty potentates, who even invited the Communes to affix their seal to treaty engagements and other public documents in confirmation of their own signature to those particular undertakings.

At the end of the thirteenth century the artisans were still destitute of political rights. They were freemen, no doubt, and benefited by the privileges conferred upon the town in which they earned their livelihood, but they were never recognised as burghers, and occupied altogether a very inferior position. They enjoyed a certain degree of personal comfort, and from a material point of view they were well to do, but they had no voice in the conduct of public affairs, until the Van Artevelde raised them to a higher level, more conformable to their industry, intelligence, and



force of numbers. With the advance of commerce, manufacturing industry could not fail to make corresponding progress. Flemish cloth had long been renowned for its durability, but in the absence of markets, fairs, roads, and safe transit, its use was inevitably much circumscribed. But as the demand increased the supply gradually augmented. The artisans flocked to central points for the sake of mutual protection, and of the outlet for their labour which was gradually opening. Towns now took form and magnitude, and capital came to the assistance of individual industry. Workmen organised themselves into separate bodies or corporations, according to their respective callings, and elected a head man, though seldom from their own ranks.

Within the *métier*, or guild, there reigned the most perfect equality. Contrary to the spirit of modern political economy, the individual was ignored so far as his own particular tastes or wishes were concerned. He was simply part of a piece of mechanism put together on the principle of extreme selfishness for the benefit of the employers of labour. At the same time, by a singular inconsistency, great care was taken to secure a certain amount of well being to every member of the company. A master-workman could not, as a rule, employ more than three journeymen, nor might he lure from another master any one of his men. If any one obtained a large order, he was bound to give notice to the head-men of his craft-guild. To prevent the undue coalition of capitalists, it was forbidden to place more than a limited number of looms in a workshop, or to throw two workshops into one. Competition

was put down with a high hand, whether attempted by foreigners or within the commune. Much coil was made about receiving into a craft-guild a citizen of another town, unless it could be shown that extra hands were really wanted. Free trade was for the most part interdicted. Neither English nor any other kind of foreign cloth could be imported into Bruges or Ghent, the former town being equally prohibitive in the matter of shoes and boots, while other articles were excluded from other places to the prejudice of the consumer. Generally speaking, however, the great markets and fairs were open to the merchandise of every region of the globe. Unwearying attention was paid to secure efficiency in the members of each guild. For the most part, apprentices were expected to have completed their twentieth year before they could enter the service of a master-workman. The period of apprenticeship depended, of course, upon the nature of the industry, and usually lasted from three to six years, at the end of which an apprentice was called a *cnæp*—a knave or journeyman—and for the next year or two hired himself to an employer of labour. After that, on payment of certain fees, he was entitled to start in business on his own account, but hampered by innumerable petty regulations which left him no opportunity of availing himself of any originality or particular talent he might possess. The object seems to have been to maintain a general average excellence. Although a man of exceptional skill and ability had little advantage over his less brilliant comrades, a really bad workman was a rarity, and was liable to a fine for every mistake he made.

The price of every kind of work was fixed by the head-man of each craft. Butchers, bakers, barbers, tradesmen of every denomination, had their prices so regulated as to yield a small profit on every transaction. The hours of labour were so precisely defined that no master workman could steal a march upon his neighbours by beginning at an earlier or leaving off at a later hour. Workshops were opened and closed at certain hours, with a rest at mid-day, nor was any sort of labour allowed at night, or on Sundays and saints' days, or on the eve of a festival of the Church, or on Saturday afternoon. Wages, too, were settled according to a regular scale, either by the day or by the job, and must be paid in hard cash. The cost even of the raw material, where it was not actually fixed, must be made known to all who might care to enquire, while wool was purchased by the guild collectively, and distributed on terms of strict equality to the weavers. Even the fashion of "dressing" a stall was subjected to a certain standard. In short, competition was sedulously crushed. To use a homely phrase, artisans and their employers were like toads under a harrow. The idea was to maintain a fraternal union, but the result must have been to create a fraternal disgust and feeling of impatience, where the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

The sentiment of solidarity was potent in these trade companies, each of which had its own chapel, and, generally, its own hospital, as well as its own *herberg*, or house of call, in which were preserved its charters and other public documents. Any

glaring violation of morality, and every infraction of the criminal laws sufficed for the expulsion of a member. A craft-guild was something more than a trade-union. It made its own internal laws and regulations. It discussed collectively its common interests. It was presided over by a *doyen* or *deken*, elected by the jurats or *vinders*. It had its own *enaep*, or usher. It had its own tribunal, from whose decisions there was no appeal. The number of *metiers* became very considerable in the fourteenth century. At Bruges there were 52; at least as many at Oudenaerd; and 59 at Ghent, in addition to many subdivisions or sections. This multiplicity of callings was in itself a weakness, as tending to foment petty jealousies where the distinction was drawn too fine. As already remarked, there was no initiative possible to any individual. Every member of a guild was, so to speak, wound round with swaddling cloths, like an Egyptian mummy or a Flemish baby. Everything was done by rule and measure, and one event happened to the wise man and to the fool. For all that, industry flourished to an amazing extent in the "good towns." At the worst time, shortly after the battle of Cassel, there were still 2000 looms at work in Ghent, while Ypres annually turned out 89,000 pieces of cloth. It is also clearly shown by M. Vanderkindere that the purchasing power of an artisan's wages was sufficiently great to command a large measure of well being. He was in a position to provide his wife and family with a suitable home, usually in the suburbs, to clothe them decently and comfortably, and to give them abundance of good, wholesome food.

Luxuries alone were expensive in the Middle Ages, and about them working men seldom troubled themselves overmuch.

The medal had its reverse side also. So long as the land was at peace without and within, all went well with the artisans, but their condition was pitiable in time of war or civil commotion. If the enemy approached the town, they fled within the walls, and beheld their habitations consigned to the flames. A difference with France implied a scarcity of wine and corn; with England, a stoppage of the supply of the raw material essential to their industry. Commerce ceased at once, and every loom stood still. Neither were there any savings-banks or workhouses in those days. Working men lived well, but it was from hand to mouth. What they received regularly, they spent promptly, so that when bad times came they were speedily reduced to abject destitution. Now and again a pestilence, the direct consequence of the absence of sanitation, made terrible ravages among the labouring classes both of the rural and of the urban population. And what rendered these misfortunes and calamities less endurable was the comparative exemption of the rich from suffering. The poor complained, too, that the governing class squandered among themselves the revenues derived from customs and duties on the necessaries of life, that justice was venal, that public offices were bought and sold, and that one law did not protect the needy and the opulent. Whether these opinions were well founded or exaggerated, they were held with tenacity, and as a natural result violent outbursts of popular indignation were of frequent

recurrence, and much bloodshed and misery intervened before order could be restored, or the semblance of a reconciliation brought about. And in the fourteenth century it was the democracy that gained for a time the upper hand.

## CHAPTER VI.

The Artisans of Ghent—Quarrels of the Guilds—Upheaval of the Industrial Classes—Bruges—Decline of Flemish Manufactures—The Rural Population—Spade Husbandry—Agricultural Produce—Condition of the Peasantry—Taxation—Disunion of the Communes—The Church in Flanders.

THE artisans of Ghent, through whose zeal and perseverance the temporary triumph of the democracy was achieved, were the last to take an active part in the popular insurrections against the selfishness of the great, and especially of the Counts. The influence of the Leliaerds availed to prevent the town militia from joining their fellow-countrymen in their contests with the French troops, though many of the weavers made their way to share the victory of Courtrai and the defeat of Cassel. The burgher aristocracy, however, refused to serve against their over-lord, and thus drew upon themselves the distrust and hatred of the democratic classes. The contumacy of the weavers was punished by the victorious faction. For twelve years, from 1325 to 1337, they were deprived of their *deken*, and were subjected to various imposts, but under James van Arteveld they became the most important corporation in Ghent. For one thing, they were usually played off against the fullers, with whom they



were continually squabbling as to their respective shares of the profits on cloth, and more often than not the *petits métiers*, or inferior industries, made common cause with the fullers. Terrible street-fights ensued, and sometimes hundreds of artisans were slain outright. There is good reason to believe that about the year 1326 the townsfolk of Ghent were divided into three "members" or groups—that of the weavers, that of the fullers, and that of the minor associated trades. Historians, however, usually ascribe this threefold division to James van Arteveld, about the year 1340 or 1341, only substituting the *poortery*, or retired burghers, for the fullers; but in this they were probably mistaken. As a fact, Van Arteveld avoided the introduction of innovations. He was rather careful to revive and confirm the old order of things, and thus re-established the political government of the town in the hands of the weavers, fullers, and minor corporations, leaving to the *poortery* the exercise of the legitimate influence due to their wealth, intelligence, and personal character.

A few years after the death of James van Arteveld, Louis de Maele broke up the patriotic union of the different guilds, and once more won over to his own side the burgher aristocracy. At Bruges he succeeded in crushing both the fullers and the weavers, and at Ghent the latter were worsted in a street fight by the *poortery* and their adherents. The weavers were again deprived of their *deken*, and this time for ten years, until, in 1359, they recovered their ascendancy and drove the fullers into the background, in which condition they remained to the end. It is, however, worthy

of note that each time the weavers were left without a head, mention is made of a *doyen* or *deken* of the *poortery*. Thrice does the burgher nobility appear as one of the three estates, or members, of the commune, but on the third occasion, about 1380, it was at the expense of the fullers. Briefly, then, the artisan class forced its way to the front in the early part of the fourteenth century, and under the sway of James van Arteveld, the weavers, who formed the most democratic portion of the population, were dominant chiefly through their accord with the fullers. But when the old discord was renewed, the latter reunited themselves with the small trades, and the weavers lost their preponderance.

Liberty was still unknown and unsought. Each movement that had taken place was impelled by purely selfish motives. It was a struggle of classes, each striving to attain the highest rank. The wealthy tradesmen, retired from business, gave themselves no rest until they were recognised as the equals of the heritable burghers. Then, the rural population murmured against the privileges conferred upon, or purchased by, the townsfolk, and gave much trouble until they also were permitted, on certain conditions and on payment of certain fees, to enjoy a share of these good things. Finally, the working-men objected to their political subordination, and strove fiercely to be as their masters and employers. There were, however, very real grievances, the removal of which should have added to the stability of the State by insuring the welfare and contentment of the entire community. These wrongs, such as the mal-administration of justice,

inequality before the law, the vicious mal-treatment of the weak by the strong, of the friendless by the powerful, the arbitrary imposition and unfair distribution of taxes, and the ruinous, demoralising extravagance of the rich, could only be redressed by throwing open to all classes every public office hitherto reserved for the *poortery*. At Bruges this problem was partially solved, though the actual power still remained in the hands of the aristocracy. So long as Flanders was a mere federation of Communes, more frequently antagonistic than sympathetic towards each other, it was impossible to organize a system of administration for the whole country, and which all should be equally interested in maintaining. In default of any such co-operation, every Commune swayed to and fro according as the aristocratic or the democratic element obtained the mastery, and thus the arrogance of the *poortery* and the envious jealousy of the artizan class went on counterbalancing each other to the infinite prejudice of the whole country, which became a sort of shuttlecock between the Count and his over-lord, except when these two agreed to assist one another in plundering the disaffected of all classes. It is to the credit of the artisan class that they appeared to understand and appreciate the policy of James van Arteveld, first of all in breaking down the barriers which separated Flanders from Brabant and Hainault, and secondly in cementing a close alliance between the three "good towns" of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres,—Lille and Douai having passed irrecoverably under the power of France. To the captain-general of each of those towns he confided the

command of the military forces of their respective districts, and had further time been allotted to him he would, doubtless, have built up a commercial democracy against which, aided by England, the chivalry of France would have idly hurled itself, to be broken and scattered like a wave dashing against an iron-bound coast. Nor would the democratic movement have been confined to Flanders. Throughout the fourteenth century an upheaval of the industrial classes again and again shook and terrified society in France and Italy, but all real progress was checked by the violent excesses which disgraced every evanescent period of success.

In those days Bruges was the commercial capital of the western world. Its geographical position was unrivalled, and made it the natural emporium of the merchandise of every trading community on the face of the globe. The Hanse, of which Bruges was the vital point, extended from Novgorod to London, and by the year 1330 had become a federation of flourishing towns and cities, rather than a union of guilds. Alliances were made on equal terms with princes and potentates, who engaged to respect the privileges claimed by the members of the Hanse within their respective territories. The safe commodious harbour of the Zwyn was crowded with vessels from the most distant seas, laden with the products of every clime. Every civilized language was spoken in the streets of Bruges, though Ghent, under the Van Artevelde, successfully disputed its supremacy, and by the end of the century Antwerp usurped its place as one of the most important entrepôts of western commerce.

The brilliant epoch of Flemish prosperity was, indeed, of brief duration. One political crisis followed so quickly upon the heels of another that the country never completely settled down to industrial pursuits. Confidence began to fade, and all too soon it was discovered that the manufactures of Flanders could no longer be depended upon. The materials were too often of inferior quality, while the fabric had deteriorated through careless and dishonest workmanship. Towns as well as individuals became seriously burdened with debt. Taxes had to be imposed to cover the interest. Life was no longer so easy and comfortable as in the days gone by. Commerce languished, the peculiar fabrics of the country became discredited in foreign markets, and the artisans fell into destitution. Complaints, too, were made by other members of the Hanseatic League that their privileges were no longer respected, that justice was not equally administered to foreigners and to Flemings, especially if natives of Bruges, that faith was not kept in business matters, whether great or small, and that no redress was attainable for wilful damages and personal violence. Northern pirates again appeared in the Channel, seized and plundered defenceless vessels, and devastated the coasts. The Flemings were finally expelled from the Hanse, and for some years Flanders was placed beyond the pale of international commerce. Then came the mortal stroke. The Zwyn gradually filled up until there was scarce water enough for decked fishing-boats. Bruges ceased to be a port, and Sluys was practically inaccessible from the sea. Then Damme dwindled to the proportions of a considerable hamlet; its warehouses

disappeared, and now the site of its ramparts is occupied by a dangerous morass, and half a dozen instruments of torture preserved in the quaint old town-hall are the only attractions that remain to excite and disappoint the curiosity of the tourist.

A few lines may be devoted to the rural population. Less intelligent and vivacious than the inhabitants of towns, the country folk were also less subjected to political crises, and for the most part led an untroubled life, unsweetened by much pleasure, but unembittered by anxiety about daily bread. The agricultural labourer naturally benefited by the growth and prosperity of the neighbouring towns, and many a village was better peopled in the fourteenth than in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In one respect, as is clearly shown by Professor Vanderkindere, the position of the peasant at that period would compare favourably with that enjoyed by the same class in these days. He was an hereditary tenant and could not be evicted from his little plot of land, or subjected to an annual or capricious increase of rent; neither could he be made to pay for the results of the improvements introduced by himself. The form of servitude known as *main-morte* had not, indeed, entirely died out, but it had very generally been superseded by the right to the *meilleur cattel*, which in its turn was in an advanced stage of decadence. The *main-morte* arose out of the want of capital on the part of the peasantry, who were supplied with the necessary funds by the landlord, who recouped himself as well as he could on the demise of his debtor, by seizing whatever he might be possessed of at his death. This usage,



however, became an anachronism when the relations of landlord and tenant acquired a character of perpetuity and were transmissible from father to son. Instead, therefore, of claiming all, the landlord contented himself with appropriating the *meilleur cattel*, or the most valuable article possessed by the deceased, whether implement, animal, or furniture. This custom also fell into desuetude in the latter part of the century under review, and peasants developed into farmers paying rent and finding their own capital. Large holdings were consequently less numerous and less in favour than small allotments, for comparatively few agriculturists were monied men, and loans could only be raised at an onerous rate of interest. Spade husbandry was greatly affected and with so much success that Flemish gardeners and cultivators were in much request in all parts of Europe, though no foreign country pleased them so well as the alluvial plains of East Norfolk. A large portion of Flanders, however, was still covered with marshes into which the sea made frequent irruptions, or with forests infested by wolves and other wild animals. Considerable tracts of land, owing to the scarcity of farm-yard manure, were necessarily withdrawn from annual cultivation and left to lie fallow.

Flax and hemp were grown to a wide extent, but it does not appear that wine was made in Flanders proper, though the vineyards of Louvain enjoyed a certain reputation. Winter roots were unknown. Among cereal produce, rye was prominent, as it is at the present day. Hops were appreciated by the larger brewers, though a great deal of beer was then



brewed for immediate consumption, and which needed not the bitter preservative. Kitchen gardens supplied peas, beans, vetches, onions, garlic, mustard, and, above all, orache—an old-fashioned pot-herb now superseded by spinach. No mention is made of plums, but apples, pears, and cherries were abundant. The dairy produce and the poultry of Flanders were much esteemed in France, though English cheeses were coming into demand. Not that the peasants indulged in these delicacies. Their ordinary fare consisted of bread, curds, and cheese, with occasionally a piece of salt pork—a diet favourable for the production of scorbutic complaints. The lodgments of the labourers were open to improvement. They were for the most part constructed of mud, and were much too small for health or decency, besides being unprovided with an escape for the smoke, except through the door, or, it might be, through an unglazed window. Candles being too costly for common use, the winter evenings were spent in darkness, rendered visible by the flickering light of the logs, or peat, smouldering on the hearth.

Ecclesiastical or seignorial tithes were levied on all kinds of produce, and on cattle. Military service could usually be commuted by a money payment, but it was less easy to compound for the obligation to find lodging or transport for the Count or immediate lord and his followers, to repair roads and fortifications, to mount guard on certain occasions, and to serve in the landwehr. Besides these exceptional charges, the rural population had to work gratuitously for their lords so many days in the year, from 12 to 52, in addition to

the various claims enforced by their immediate landlords, including offerings in kind, in the shape of eggs, poultry, and so forth. On the occasion of a wedding in the family of the lord, or to pay his ransom from captivity, and on various other seignorial pretexts, the savings of the peasant-farmer were expected to be forthcoming, so that, upon the whole, it is not surprising that rural charters came to be demanded with as much vehemence as, and perhaps with more violence than, dwellers in towns usually manifested. It does not appear, however, that these charters availed to restrain the feudal aristocracy from committing abominable outrages on the honour of the wives and daughters of their dependents. The right of might was never more brutally exemplified than previous and subsequent to the revolt of Zannequin and his comrades, suppressed at the foot of Mount Cassel. The country was laid waste, whole villages burnt to the ground, and thousands of peasants and artisans cruelly butchered to terrify the survivors into future submission. Nor were the townsfolk more considerate. Within a certain distance, varying from three to five leagues, from the "good towns," the villagers were strictly prohibited from making more cloth than was absolutely wanted for local purposes. Much cruelty and oppression were likewise exercised by the town militia when traversing the open country, and at last the rural population became so hostile to the burgher-folk that they were nearly always ready to rally to the banner of the King or Count when warring upon the Communes.

The power of the Communes rapidly declined after the death of James van Arteveld, though it partially

revived during the brief leadership of his son Philip. There had throughout been a lamentable want of concert. The great towns were united only in oppressing the small towns and the village population. It was seldom that Bruges and Ghent came to a common understanding, and the slightest cause sufficed to rekindle their mutual jealousy, and to bring about a coldness, if not a positive antagonism. Even the guilds inhabiting the same town were continually at strife one with the other, and more than once the weavers and the fullers tried conclusions in the streets and market-places, which were strewed with the bodies of the slain. After every triumph of the Count's adherents, the communal charters were shorn of their most valued privileges. The municipal magistrates were at last required to render to the Count an annual account of their stewardship, and their authority was so diminished that only the *Leliaerds* cared to hold office. The liberty of the citizen was set at naught. The *échevins* themselves could be imprisoned, banished, and otherwise punished according to the sole pleasure of the Count. The burghers were even called upon to go on active service beyond the frontiers of the county at the Count's bidding. The administration of justice, corrupt and untrustworthy, gradually passed out of the hands of the municipal magistrates, and was entrusted to trained lawyers, who substituted laws and statutes for civic customs and traditional usages. Unhappily, under Guy de Dampierre recourse was had to torture, and evidence was extorted from the delirium of pain and terror.

A very bitter feeling towards the Papacy prevailed in Flanders throughout the "Babylonian captivity" of the Roman Pontiffs at Avignon. From Clement V. to Urban V. the expatriated Popes were the creatures of the French Kings, and abused the spiritual influence of the Church to support the encroachments of that Crown. Following the example of Honorius III., in the reign of Philip Augustus, the Avignon Popes invested the Kings of France with the privilege of deciding when an interdict should be launched against the Flemings, and also when the awful sentence should be annulled. On every occasion they showed themselves pitiless towards the Communes, and unscrupulous in confirming the usurpations of royalty. Accordingly, when the great schism of 1378 rent asunder the Roman Catholic world, the Flemings declared for Urban VI., and set at defiance the rival Court of Clement VII. at Avignon. It is worthy of remark that not a single bishop resided on Flemish territory. A small tract of land lying in the diocese of Utrecht belonged to the Archbishopric of Cologne, but the rest of the country acknowledged as its immediate spiritual head the Archbishop of Rheims, whose subordinates were the Bishops of Arras, T rouanne, Tournai, and Cambrai. The last-named diocese was, strictly speaking, an Imperial See, but all the four prelates were appointed from Avignon, and were, besides, as large landed proprietors, naturally drawn to the Crown. The two dioceses of Tournai and T rouanne, both Flemish towns, comprised the greater portion of Flanders, but their bishops were devoted to the French interests, and were usually delegated to

pronounce the sentence of excommunication demanded by the Kings of France.

The Cistercians and some other monastic orders resisted the royal pretensions, not, indeed, from any partiality for the Communes, but simply to shield themselves against the payment of the tithes sanctioned by Nicholas IV., at the solicitation of Philip the Fair. The clergy in general were also for a time carried away by the national movement excited by James van Arteveld, and both then and on a few other occasions, contributed liberally to the popular cause. As a rule, however, the Communes and the clergy were estranged from one another by conflicting interests—the one craving for liberty, the other opposed to the progress of ideas, and bent only on the aggrandisement of the Church and the accumulation of riches for their own benefit.

## CHAPTER VII.

Clerical Pretensions — Superstition — Excommunication — Immorality of the Clergy — Religious Sentiment — The Mendicant Friars — The Flagellants — Houses — Sanitation — The Women of Flanders — Love of Dress — Dissolute Habits — Public Hot Baths — General Laxity of Morals.

ONE potent and unceasing cause of jealousy between the clergy and the Communes was the pretension put forward by the former to be exempt from lay jurisdiction. Misdemeanours, and even flagrant crimes committed by clerks too often escaped punishment, and not unfrequently guilty persons claimed and were allowed the benefit of clergy without being at all entitled to it. Even when the case was too bad to obtain absolute impunity, clerical misdoers were dealt with gently, "because of their dignity." The right of asylum was shockingly abused, and was almost invariably accorded for sordid reasons. The ecclesiastical tribunals further arrogated to themselves the supervision of social manners and morality, and presumed to interfere in civil causes. Evidence was an article of sale, and the very judges, the Papal Court enjoying a bad pre-eminence, expected valuable gifts and large donations of money. Really atrocious offences against society, and especially against the domestic circle, were condoned on payment of a small fine to the Church.



Confession of guilt, followed by a pecuniary penance, absolved offenders from the just consequences of their evil doings, and thus the breach between the clergy and the laity went on, ever widening. Another cause of contention was the question of education. In the Middle Ages the clergy alone possessed any knowledge of letters, and of course monopolised the direction of schools and colleges, and gave to instruction the bias most advantageous to their own interests. As time went on the burghers demurred to the exclusive teaching of the clerical order, and finally succeeded in obtaining private teachers for their children, who thus remained under their own eye. This was the more necessary because instances occurred of great brutality being exercised upon pupils.

It has already been mentioned that the clergy were forbidden to deal in wines and other articles liable to duty, but they generally contrived to evade the prohibition. Unburdened by taxes, they were enabled to compete unfairly with the ordinary tradespeople, heavily handicapped in that respect, and by the necessity of maintaining a wife and family. The greatest and most pernicious influence wielded by the clergy, took its rise in the superstitious terrors of the sick and dying. The hope of eternal beatitude was cheap at the sacrifice of lands or other property, which must, in any case, be abandoned. The sale of indulgences was another fruitful source of income, and even Louis de Maele was not above purchasing the prayers of the Bruges clergy by a munificent present of generous wine. Individuals, too, were sometimes overwhelmed by a sentence of excommunication for quite venial



offences, such as fishing in a pond belonging to an abbey, or procrastination in handing over a legacy bequeathed for so-called pious purposes. An interdict to a Roman Catholic of the Middle Ages was more terrible than is to a Hindoo expulsion from his caste. The pleasures of earth and the joys of heaven were alike withheld from the poor wretch who languished under the ban of the Church. He could not marry, for no priest would perform the ceremony. If he became a father, his babe could not be admitted into the Christian fold, so long as he remained contumacious. He dared not partake of the holy symbols of his faith, or enter a place of worship while mass was being celebrated. If he himself, or any member of his household, near and dear to him, were lying on a sick bed in hourly expectation of death, the consolations of religion were withheld, and the last moments of life were rendered inexpressibly awful by the belief that the gates of heaven were closed against the impenitent enemy of the Church. Many a will, too, was framed under the terrifying exhortations of the attendant priest, and the widow and her children were left to struggle with poverty, while the Church appropriated the savings of their late bread-winner and protector. But as superstition subsided, monastic establishments fell into debt, and, in their dire necessity, had recourse to other expedients. They filched considerable estates from their neighbours and from the State by the most unjustifiable means. They were a law unto themselves, and scrupled at nothing that could add to their wealth or power, and at times put forth their hand to seize what belonged unto the Crown.

Then, but not always then, they met with their match.

Although it would be manifestly unjust to accept as absolute truth the denunciations by contemporary satirists of the lax morals of the clergy, there is much reason to believe that both priests and monks led, in too many cases, a dissolute and profligate life. From an early date their gross libertinism had been the theme of ribald tales recited by the Trouvères of Northern France and Flanders; but there must also have been much sterling piety, for otherwise religion would have perished utterly, and the people, in their righteous indignation, would have demolished the churches, sacked the monasteries, and dispersed the unfaithful shepherds. Still, it is abundantly evident that disgraceful scandals were rife in the clerical body, and that from the highest dignitaries of the Church to the humblest village priests, a not inconsiderable minority, at least, were tainted with a tendency to coarse and vicious pleasures. The very prelates were accused of practising usury, of exercising simony, of frequenting taverns and houses of ill-fame, of joining in the dance, of swearing round oaths, and of taking bets and offering wagers. They were further charged with yielding to reckless expenditure on dogs, horses, and riotous living, which drove them to illegal exactions and to robbing the poor. The monasteries were depicted in the most revolting colours, nor did the nuns escape the lash of satire. They were said to give themselves up to all the vanities of the flesh, to adorn themselves in gay apparel, and to indulge in every luxury that wealth could purchase. The simple

priests, who were unable to gratify their longings for carnal enjoyments, were forced to content themselves with *jong-wiven*, or temporary companions of the female sex, of whom they could disembarass themselves when beauty waned or possession wearied. Their children—so it was asserted—were brought up as ecclesiastics, and not unfrequently attained comfortable prebends, or made themselves useful to great princes and lords. This picture must have been surcharged with glaring colours, but that it was not altogether visionary is seen from what happened in the fifteenth century, when it was found necessary to forbid the canons of Antwerp Cathedral and other ministers of religion to eat and drink in taverns, and to keep mistresses. In rural districts—in France as well as in Flanders—we hear of *clerici uxorati*, of priests who had contracted a civil marriage, and lived decently and soberly, though, as a punishment for their contumacy, they were subjected to the action of the laws, like the laity.

But there could be no greater mistake than to conclude that the religious sentiment had become extinct through the misconduct of certain ministers of religion. It is true that the ignorance of the laity with regard to Biblical teachings was even greater than it is in our own times, but they were not the less superstitious. They attended the daily performance of the Mass. They gave alms to the poor. They rested from their labours on the Sabbath, and on Saturday afternoon refrained from work in honour of the Mother of Jesus. They went upon pilgrimages. They believed firmly in the eternity of rewards and punishments in the future life, which they wholly materialised. Religious

processions were composed of the highest in the land, relics of which may still occasionally be seen in Flemish towns, and even in Brabant and Hainault. Beelzebub and his demons were beings of hideous forms, of inconceivable malignity, and possessed of power scarce inferior to that of the Deity. The interference of the devil in human affairs was direct and incessant, and could only be counteracted by offerings to the Virgin. There was unquestioning faith in the efficacy of charms, of the reiterated repetition of certain forms of prayer, and of fragments of dead men's bones. Signs and omens were recorded as scrupulously as in the days of the Roman Republic. The most incredible things were accepted with the greatest credulity. Superstition was everywhere rampant, while religion was nowhere practised. Some of the more enlightened moralists, indeed, began to let in light upon the dreary darkness. Words were uttered, or at least written, in favour of religious tolerance, and even Jews were declared to be human beings. The value of image worship was called in doubt. Inward purity was pronounced more important than the observance of saints' days, and here and there the idea was entertained that God was a Spirit, and demanded spiritual devotion. These, however, were exceptional cases. For the most part it was deemed right and befitting that those who could not believe all the articles of priestly faith should be burned at the stake. The Inquisition answered to all doubts "eloquently well." Sceptics were tortured, and Jews were robbed, beaten, broken on the wheel, or surrounded with blazing faggots.

They were worse treated than in modern Russia or Germany.

The mendicant friars, indeed, exerted themselves nobly to stem the tide of open profligacy, but toleration was beyond their lights, nor were they able to emancipate themselves from the slavery of ignorance. Sprung from the populace, they understood the wants and feelings of the lower classes, and thus acquired over them immense influence, which they generally employed to good purpose. Politically, they were democrats, and entered heartily into all movements directed against the absolutism of Counts or Kings. They revived the almost obsolete practice of delivering sermons, and made a point of addressing their congregations in the vernacular tongue, and with colloquial familiarity. The most popular of these orders were the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, who entered the most readily into the every-day life of the industrial community. The Carmelites and Augustinian Friars followed closely in their steps, but the Dominicans took higher ground, and conducted the superior schools. They also set great store by pulpit eloquence, and from them were chosen the officers of the Inquisition. But, as already remarked, not one of these orders was so much beloved as the Franciscans, who made common cause with the people, accompanied the militia to the field of battle, and were often punished for their sympathy with the vanquished. The secular clergy were, of course, opposed to them, and taunted them with their dependance for a livelihood on the alms of the poor and ignorant. The Friars were also accused of selling absolution for serious crimes, of

flattering evil passions, of hypocrisy and meanness, of earning a living by glossing over vicious practices, and closing their eyes and ears at the touch of money in their palm. Nevertheless, a lay order grew out of the followers of St. Francis, who, without renouncing the world and its vanities, wore a particular garb, fasted three days in the week, and generally comported themselves as ascetic devotees, permitting themselves the trials and the joys of wedlock.

A little later, when the spirit of mysticism was roving abroad uncontrolled, the Flagellants made their appearance, hoping to arrest the Black Death by publicly scourging themselves with iron-tipped thongs of leather, which drew blood at every stroke. Twice a day, thrice on the Friday, they knelt down in the streets, and flogged their bare shoulders, intoning a dismal litany, and turning the heads of weak-minded men and silly women. In Flanders the Béguines and Bégards, or religious beggars, do not appear to have fallen into the excesses which disgraced those orders in Germany and in the neighbouring States. The Bégards, indeed, were hardly entitled to be regarded as a Christian brotherhood. They belonged to the artisan class, and professed a sort of pantheism, which, in their eyes, justified the commission of every sin without incurring sinfulness. There were, besides, free-thinkers, who presumed to dream of a future when there should be no longer a Pope or a Priesthood, and when mankind should be content to serve the Creator with "upright hearts and pure." These eccentric individuals were,



naturally, punished with severity proportionate to the danger of their heresy.

So early as the thirteenth century the principal streets of Flemish towns were paved, and kept in good order, though lighting at night was a much later improvement. The industrial classes lodged in miserable huts and cabins, and even rich burghers not unfrequently dwelt in houses with timber façades, but most of those who could afford the luxury, built commodious stone mansions, or *steenen*, surrounded by lofty walls, and a broad moat, and sometimes defended by a couple of towers, though boasting only a single chimney. The interior was occupied by a large hall, into which opened the dwelling apartments. Houses were not numbered, being mostly distinguished by the escutcheon or emblem which was engraved on the seal of the proprietor. Fires were of almost daily occurrence, and in a few hours a whole street, or even a quarter of the town, would be reduced to ashes. Towards the end of the fourteenth century thatched roofs were prohibited, and were replaced by tiles, by which the danger from flying sparks was greatly diminished. There is no means of arriving at an accurate census of the population, but Professor Vanderkindere is of opinion that in Flanders, as in certain districts of France, it was not less in the fourteenth than in the nineteenth century. Under the Burgundian dynasty there was a marked and even rapid decline—emigration setting in towards Brabant, and especially to Brussels, the seat of the Ducal Court.

Sanitation was still in an embryotic condition. The



inhabitants of towns were enjoined to clear away the filth in front of their houses once a fortnight, and to remove the dung-heaps at their doors every Monday. Pigs were not allowed to wander about the streets during certain hours of the day, and barber-surgeons were forbidden to keep those animals, lest they should be tempted to pour into their troughs the human blood drawn from their patients. Cesspools too near the town-ditch were liable to heavy fines, because from the moat the citizens derived most of their drinking-water. Even now in the low country the water supply is execrable. Great care, however, was taken to insure wholesome fish and meat, though the regulations were so minute as to indicate much previous shortcoming, and to leave the door open for their violation. Public health suffered terribly from bad drainage and imperfect ventilation, the causes of destructive epidemics. The cattle, too, were subject to diseases which carried off whole droves at a time, while sudden inundations swept away or soddened the kindly fruits of the earth. The constant presence of leprosy attested alike the want of cleanliness, an unwholesome diet, and the absence of restraint upon the afflicted. There was no absolute want of hospitals, but great abuses prevailed until they were taken out of the hands of the clergy and transferred to the civil authorities. Idiots and the insane were cruelly treated. The most dangerous were imprisoned, the others being expelled from the town after being flogged, or having their ears cut off, by the common hangman.

The women of Flanders, we are assured, were

admired for the freshness and brilliancy of their complexion, and were in great request in England for immoral purposes. Golden hair was most in vogue, very dark hair being regarded as a trace of servile origin. The sudden afflux of riches at the period under notice enabled the commercial aristocracy to indulge the taste of their wives and daughters for showy jewellery and gorgeous raiment. Great attention was paid to bed linen, which was the more necessary when men and women alike, even of the highest rank, slept in a state of perfect nudity. The fourteenth century, however, was remarkable, if for nothing else, for the invention of the day-shirt and night-dress. Precious stones, costly furs, rich Italian silks, and the bright red cloth of the Flemish looms, combined to impart a queenly magnificence to the fair dames and damsels of the "good towns" of Flanders. Out of doors it was their custom to wrap themselves up closely and warmly, but at home, behind their thick walls and within the influence of the glowing stove, they loved to display the well-developed beauties of their neck, the amplitude of their shoulders, and the velvety softness of their skin. If they left little to imagination, memory had no reason to complain. Diaphanous gauze was a favourite substitute for heavier and less generous stuffs. Fashions, however, were not racy of the soil, but were imported from France and Italy—especially from the latter country. It is not within the scope of this little work to illustrate the ever-changing forms of head-dress, or to mark the passage from trains of stupendous length to a dress so tightly fitting as to give the exact form of

every limb, and, in the words of a learned Professor, “à accuser le plus possible la saillie du ventre par la tension de la jupe.” Men’s dresses were not less extravagant, but may be here conveniently passed over.

Unfortunately the lower classes strove to ape the follies of the rich, and plunged into expenses which led to ruin of purse and character. Even a German contemporary writer complains that every young girl expects to be called “Miss,” though her mother may have sold poultry or vegetables. Self-indulgence took the place of honest industry. Many a good-looking girl found a fortune in her face more easily than she would have done at the distaff. Married women supplemented their honourable gains by means concealed from their husbands. The tavern became the Sunday resort of both sexes, until the guilds were compelled to forbid women from remaining in a tavern longer than was necessary to drain one cup of liquor. But what avail laws in opposition to the tone of society? Teniers’ pictures only too faithfully delineate the observance of the Sabbath afternoon in a Flemish village, and, with a slight modification of costume, are correct representations of a modern Kermesse. Rape and abduction were common, for a gift in the hand perverted the integrity of the judge. Illegitimate children were seen in almost every family rich enough to maintain them, and were often brought up together with the offspring of lawful wedlock. There was certainly much laxity of morals, all the more apparent from the frequency and severity of the laws launched by the municipal authorities against debauchery and

looseness of deportment. In the larger towns the *onnutte*—or *personnes inutiles*, as they were euphemistically designated—were compelled to live in certain streets; and in some places they were forbidden to remain within the walls after the evening bell had tolled. It was all in vain. The inexorable law of supply and demand laughs at moralists and sets the legislature at defiance. Until men are content with domestic purity, the *personnes inutiles* will always find their market.

Among other institutions little conducive to morality the public hot-baths played a prominent part. They were designed somewhat after the fashion of the original Turkish bath, except that men and women, after undressing in a common room, were allowed to bathe together, though at last the mixture of the sexes was permitted only on Saturday. The rubbing, kneading, and other essential operations were performed by girls, whose dress consisted of a simple night-dress reaching to the feet. These baths were frequented by the best society of the place. A host would invite his guests to take a warm bath, and a marriage in high life would have been incomplete without a visit to one of these establishments, where repasts were provided, where rooms were set apart for dancing, and where numerous bedchambers invited the weary to rest and be thankful. It is unpleasant, however, to be reminded that frequent recourse to these baths was necessitated by the prevalence of skin diseases, and that a *badegeid* was often given as a *trinkgeld*, or a *pour-boire*, would be in these days.

In the latter half of the century men's minds were

overmuch occupied with eating and drinking, with dancing and gambling. Among the wealthy, costly banquets were the order of the day, succeeded by balls, at which the ladies displayed their personal charms and great richness of apparel. A good dinner, or supper, was a thing to be enjoyed and remembered, unless, as in the case of a representative of the town of Ghent, death followed upon a surfeit within twenty-four hours. Women as well as men rode to the chase of the wild boar, though more generally they preferred to fly hawk or falcon at hare or wild fowl. Both sexes played for high stakes, and grievous scandal sometimes resulted. Women also drank to excess, but presumably in the lower classes, and not quite so regularly as their male companions. The usual beverage was beer or mead, though a good deal of imported wine was consumed by those who were able to procure it. Betrothal and wedding feasts among the burgher class were wont to degenerate into orgies, and entailed a ruinous expenditure, notwithstanding the promulgation of sumptuary laws regulating the number of guests, of minstrels, and of courses. So, likewise, for christenings, churchings, and funerals. The vulgar tendency to coarse superabundance had to be combated, not by superior taste, but by a hard and fast legal line, which was either treated as non-existent, or met by a fine provided for in the previous calculation. And yet in Germany the word *flämisch* was synonymous with refinement and delicacy. But drunkenness and too great fondness for dress were not the only blemishes in the character of the Flemings in the Middle Ages. In avenging their constant quarrels they were guilty

of the most horrible cruelty. They had no reverence for human life, and had no scruples about shedding human blood. In war they showed no mercy, and in peace time were too apt to take the law into their own hands. Possibly, they were in those respects no worse than their contemporaries, and they had at least one redeeming point in their love of art, just then beginning to revive from its torpor of centuries.





PART III.



JAMES VAN ARTEVELD.



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### CHAPTER VIII.

Accession of Philip the Fair—Pretensions of Edward III.—Robert of Artois—Commercial Relations of England and Flanders—Coalition of Edward III. with the German Princes—Louis de Crécy arrests Englishmen in Flanders—Reprisals by Edward III.—Reconciliation between England and the Communes—English Envoys in Flanders—Arrest of Sohier de Courtrai—Capture of Cadzand—Misery in Ghent—James Van Arteveld—Misconceptions as to his character and position.

PHILIP THE FAIR had three sons and one daughter, Isabella, who married Edward II. of England, and gave birth to Edward III. The three sons, each in his turn, reigned over France by the respective titles of Louis X., surnamed *Hutin*, Philip the Long, and Charles the Fair, but all three died without leaving heirs male, and according to Froissart, the twelve Peers and Barons of France maintained that the kingdom was too noble to descend to a female. It is commonly supposed that the exclusion of "the distaff" was by virtue of the Salic Law, but that law only prohibited female succession to landed property, and made no mention of grandsons. Edward III. was therefore advised that, as the grandson of Philip the Fair by that monarch's daughter, Isabella, he was the

rightful heir to the Crown of France on the demise of his uncle Charles the Fair, in default of the birth of a posthumous prince, and he was further counselled to put forward his claim to the Regency of France. As he himself was then a minor, it is doubtful if this claim would have been well received, even had Philip de Valois hesitated to make good his pretensions as grandson of Philip the Bold and nephew of Philip the Fair. Unlike Edward III., he derived his title from his father, Charles of Valois, son of Philip the Bold, and grandson of Louis IX., but, as a mere abstract question, it is not easy to make the balance incline to one rather than to the other claimant. But in the eyes of the French nobles, Edward was only a vassal of the French Crown like themselves, and shortly after his accession to the throne he actually did homage to Philip for the Duchy of Guyenne. He was, besides, a foreigner and an unknown youth, whereas Philip had passed his life amongst them, and had always been regarded as the possible heir to the kingdom. Neither is it probable that Edward would have endeavoured to enforce his pretensions at the point of the sword, had his ear not been poisoned and his ambition inflamed by the traitorous exhortations of Robert Count of Artois, to whose selfish vindictiveness must be primarily attributed all the horrors of the Hundred Years' War, and the legacy of rancour bequeathed through all these ages to two neighbouring nations, who might otherwise have lived on either side of the Channel on terms of mutual respect and sympathy.

Count Robert of Artois was a gallant and accomplished knight, and had warmly espoused the cause of

Philip, who was also his brother-in-law. Dispossessed of his hereditary possessions by a seemingly unjust judgment pronounced by Philip the Fair, Count Robert had confidently expected to be restored to his estates on the accession of Philip de Valois. For some years he was in great favour at Court and, if we may credit the Canon of Chimay, "nothing was done without his knowledge." But nothing is stronger than its weakest point, and the flaw in Count Robert's case was the absence of title deeds. After a time, however, certain documents were produced which were represented as the missing instruments, but which on further examination were pronounced to be forgeries. To escape the consequences of the King's resentment, the Count fled for protection to his nephew John de Namur, by whom he was hospitably received. In these untoward circumstances Philip de Valois acted rashly and unadvisedly. He threw the Countess, his own sister, and her two sons, into prison, and treated them very rigorously, and, instead of leaving the fugitive to outstay his welcome, he stirred up the Prince Bishop of Liège to threaten Namur with invasion unless the reputed criminal were driven forth from his asylum. The Count therefore proceeded to the Court of his cousin, the Duke of Brabant, who also showed him much kindness. But again the King displayed his characteristic imperiousness, and let loose upon Brabant the forces of the neighbouring princes and great lords. The Duke was quickly compelled to tender his submission, and Robert of Artois crossed over to England, carrying with him a bitter hatred of his persecutor.

By his representations, in a great degree, Edward III. was encouraged to maintain his unwise pretensions to the throne of France, and in the military operations that ensued the Count greatly distinguished himself, until he received a mortal wound in his unsuccessful attempt to preserve Vannes for the Countess of Montfort. It is well for England even more than for France that the Count's wrongs, real or imaginary, were never fully avenged either in his own lifetime, or after his death. Had Edward III. succeeded in compelling the French nation to accept him as their sovereign, it is at Paris that he would have chiefly resided, and England would have become dependent on France, until a proud and virile race once more achieved its severance, and pursued its glorious career in its own orbit.

From the commencement of his reign Edward III. had recognised the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Flemish Communes. The exportation of wool constituted the main branch of the foreign commerce of the country, nor was it less essential to the prosperity of Flanders to obtain a regular and sufficient supply of the raw material. So jealous, however, were English legislators on the subject of the unrivalled excellence of the wool produced in their country, that it was forbidden to send live rams out of the kingdom, and in one year, at least, the duties on wool exported to the Continent amounted to £80,000, a matter of real moment to the limited revenues of those days. At that time the manufacture of woollen fabrics was almost unknown in England, notwithstanding the inducements held out to Flemish immigrants,

colonies of whom were settled in the Eastern Counties, and particularly in Norfolk. It is also worthy of note that, although material interests so closely united the wool-growers and staplers of the one country with the weavers and traders of the other, there was seldom much good feeling between the two peoples. It has already been shown what little harmony existed between the soldiers of Edward I. and the citizens of Sluys and Ghent, and Walsingham slyly remarks that the Flemings had less regard for the English than for their sacks of wool. The English men-at-arms, again, had little sympathy with the Flemish burghers, ever ready to dispute the lawful authority of their Count and overlord. The instincts and prejudices of the English knights and barons coincided with those of their French kinsfolk, or, rather, Europe had arrived at another phase of the probably eternal contest between patricians and plebeians, between those of gentle birth and their low-born competitors, between the social classes comparatively conspicuous for intelligence, stability, and various hereditary qualities and qualifications, and those who are distinguished by their discontent, their love of change, their ignorance of political science, and their tendency to mistake innovation for progress.

Philip de Valois had seen, with considerable apprehension, the strengthening of the commercial alliance between the Flemish Communes and England, and seized upon the first opportunity to create an estrangement. It was impossible that subjects of disagreement should not frequently occur between Philip and his powerful vassal who, no longer content with the



sovereignty of England, was meditating to stretch forth his hand to clutch likewise the sceptre of France. In a moment of enthusiasm the French monarch had undertaken to lead a crusade across the sea to the Holy Land, but was deterred from that romantic enterprise by tidings which reached him of the overtures that were being made by Edward to certain Princes of the Empire to induce them to form a league for the invasion of his dominions. Exposed to a sudden attack on that side, against which England was secured by her insular position, the rulers of those petty States hesitated to commit themselves unless assured of the protection of the Holy Roman Empire. Many, if not all of them, owed allegiance also to Philip for fiefs within the French borders, and by the feudal laws were restrained from bearing arms against their overlord within his own territories, though they remained free to attempt the recovery of the town and district of Cambrai which had been forcibly wrested from the Empire.

Singular complications and incongruities frequently resulted from a dual homage. The Counts of Hainault and Namur, for example, after co-operating with Edward III. before St. Quentin and Cambrai, joined Philip de Valois as soon as the allied forces reached the river Scheldt, which then constituted the French frontier. It is true, they were afterwards severely punished for their vacillation, for the feudal laws, like all others, availed only to restrain the weak, and were often evaded or set at defiance by the strong. Be that as it may, a difference having arisen between the French monarch and his vassal

touching the Duchy of Guyenne, the former instructed Louis de Crécy to arrest every Englishman within his territories. This proceeding naturally alarmed the Communes, though some months elapsed before any reprisals were made by the King of England, who was willing to let the Communes understand that he was reluctant to hold them responsible for the high-handed proceedings of their Count. At last, as redress was otherwise unobtainable, Edward caused the Flemings within his kingdom to be arrested likewise, and prohibited the further exportation of wool to Flanders. This was in the autumn of 1336.

The looms were almost immediately thrown out of work, for it does not appear that there were any speculators, or middle-men, with capital enough to enable them to lay in a stock of wool against adverse contingencies. Within the space of a few days, however, Edward made advances to both the Count and the Communes, and expressed his earnest wish to forget what was disagreeable in the past, and to re-establish their former friendly intercourse. These overtures were rejected by Louis de Crécy, but to the Communes were so eminently agreeable that, in the following spring the States of Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault agreed to an offensive and defensive alliance, so that the enemies of one should be the enemies of all three, and further bound themselves to refer all future differences to arbitration. It was also decided to renew the old relations with England, and to this agreement Louis de Crécy was compelled to affix his signature. As soon as this welcome news reached Edward III. he deputed the Bishop of Lincoln, and

the Earls of Salisbury and Huntingdon to conclude a treaty with those three States. Having landed at Dunkirk, his Ambassadors hastened to Valenciennes, where they were richly entertained by Edward's father-in-law, the Count of Hainault, by whom they were strongly advised to obtain the assistance of the Flemish Communes if the King really intended to prosecute his claims to the throne of France. As a preliminary step, they appear to have succeeded in subsidising the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Guelders, the Marquis of Juliers, and other princes holding of the Empire, though one and all showed themselves more ready to receive English gold than to supply their respective contingents. From Valenciennes the King's agents proceeded separately to Bruges, Ypres, and Ghent—the Bishop of Lincoln reserving the last-named town for the exercise of his own particular diplomacy. The prelate and his suite were greeted with extraordinary attentions, especially by Zegher or Sohier de Courtrai, the father-in-law of James van Arteveld, and a knight banneret\* of great distinction. The Englishmen are said, on their part, to have

\* A footnote supplied by Colonel Johnes to Chap. XVIII. of his translation of Froissart's "*Chronicles*," states that "Knights bannerets were formerly gentlemen of great power by landed possessions and vassals, of whom they formed companies in times of war; they were called bannerets from their having the right of bearing banners. It was necessary, in order to obtain the prerogative, to be not only a gentleman by name and arms, but also to have for vassals gentlemen who would follow their banners to the wars under the command of the banneret. Ducange cites an ancient manuscript ceremonial, which points out the manner of making a knight banneret, and the number of men he was to have follow him."

displayed a profuse magnificence, and, in the words of Froissart, to have spent such sums of money that silver and gold seemed to fly out of their hands.

Sohier de Courtrai, Lord of Dronghen or Tronchiennes, had proved himself a valiant knight, though he belonged to the burgher and not to the baronial nobility. In Flanders, as in Italy, not a few of the large land-owners were descended from men who had been successful in industrial, or commercial, pursuits, and formed an intermediate class between the feudal aristocracy and the bulk of the population, leaning, however, for the most part, to the former, and usually siding with the Count against the Communes. Sohier de Courtrai was an exception to the rule, and was as much trusted and beloved by the townsfolk as he was respected by the territorial lords. As one of the wealthiest and most influential citizens of Ghent, he took a leading part in the negotiations with the Bishop of Lincoln, and openly avowed his predilection for a close alliance with England. Such conduct naturally gave umbrage to Louis de Crécy, who, dissembling his resentment, invited the aged knight to attend a meeting of deputies from the different Flemish Communes that was about to be held at Bruges. On his arrival in that town Sohier was immediately arrested and conveyed to the castle of Rupelmonde, where he was subsequently beheaded—according to common report, while confined to his bed by severe illness. Great exertions had been made to obtain his liberation from captivity, but the Count was obdurate, and finally silenced these troublesome remonstrances

by the execution of his venerable prisoner. He also planned the capture of the English envoys, but they received timely warning and returned to their own country by way of Holland, taking ship at Dordrecht.

A garrison had been placed by the Count in the island of Cadzand, situated between the Zwyn and the mouth of the Scheldt, whence armed vessels sallied forth and did much damage to English shipping. Justly offended by these hostile enterprises against the commerce of his subjects, Edward fitted out an expedition under the command of the Earl of Derby, Sir Walter Manny, and other leaders of approved valour, who routed the Flemings with great slaughter, and made prisoner the Count's half-brother, "Sir Guy of Flanders, a good knight, but a bastard." The town was pillaged and burnt, and the English returned to their own country with their prisoners and booty. The Bruges militia, however, made such a stout resistance that, as a reward for their courage and loyalty, they were expressly permitted to repair their fortifications, which had been dismantled after the battle at Mont Cassel. A different fate, however, awaited the inhabitants of Ghent, whose eagerness to negotiate with the English was punished by the imposition of a heavy fine. A deputation of the most opulent burghers sought to mollify the Count by throwing themselves at his feet, and praying for mercy, but all to no purpose. Their supplications were unheeded, and the exactions of the Count's officers reduced the townspeople to despair. Without English wool there was no occupation for the weavers, on whose industry the prosperity of Ghent was

founded. Not a few of them escaped to England, and were settled at Worstead, in East Norfolk, which derived its name, indeed, from a particular kind of yarn spun by them from combed wool. The misery of the artisans reached to such an extreme that atrocious crimes were committed with impunity, and the laws became inoperative. Bands of starving operatives paraded the streets, shouting "*Vriheden ende Neeringhen*"—our Franchises and Crafts—but for a while, no answer was vouchsafed to their vociferations. The darkest hour, however, is that which precedes the dawn. Deliverance was nearer than they dared to anticipate.

At that time there dwelt in the Calanderberg, near the Paddenhoek, or Toads-Corner, a wealthy *poorter* named Jacob, or James, van Arteveld. Amplifying the narrative of Jehan le Bel, who, in his turn, derived his imperfect information from Gilles li Muisis, abbot of St. Martin's monastery, near Tournai, the most famous of all the mediæval chroniclers, John Froissart, canon of Chimay, portrays this remarkable man as an audacious demagogue, who went about with a body-guard of armed ruffians, and, by acts of violence, imposed his will upon his fellow citizens. He admits, indeed, that Van Arteveld possessed a fascinating and commanding eloquence, that he ruled the country with great vigour and sagacity, and that he was greatly esteemed by Edward III. On the other hand, he describes him as a brewer of metheglin—beer sweetened with honey—and accuses him of assassinating his opponents, and of applying the revenues of the country to the gratification of his own



caprice and pleasure. This delineation of Van Arteveld's character has been repeated, with casual variations, by almost every historian of those times, from the days of Froissart to our own. According to Villani, he was a man of low origin and of an exceedingly humble calling, who, by exercising the usual arts of a demagogue, made himself master of the Commune of Ghent. To the same effect wrote Mezeray and Meyer, and the whole cohort of English chroniclers, whether they expressed themselves in Latin or in their own language. The more critical and judicious writers of a later age were content to found their narratives upon the unsifted hearsay gossip of the early annalists, and thus a monstrous error has been handed down from century to century. It was natural enough that dignitaries of the Church, cadets of noble families, should misunderstand and misrepresent the policy which Van Arteveld steadily pursued from first to last. Honestly espousing the cause of the Count and his overlord, they looked upon the refractory Communes as rebels, and their ring-leader as a self-seeking tribune of the people, and therefore low born and addicted to all manner of excesses. It is little creditable, however, to modern historians that these libellous fables should have been accepted as truth, without hesitation or inquiry, and again and again repeated even after their fallacy had been demonstrated by M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, M. Auguste Voisin, and other Flemish writers of world-wide reputation.\* In the History of Edward

\* An attempt was made by the present writer so far back as the year 1845—in the August number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*—



III., by the late Mr. William Longman, James van Arteveld was for the first time treated worthily by an English historian, but subsequent writers have fallen into the old grooves, and calumniated a career which they have totally misapprehended.\*

to draw attention to the injustice that had been done to the memory of the great Burgher of Ghent, but it was not successful.

\* In the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 313—January, 1881—will be found copious citations from a considerable number of writers who have misunderstood the true position and character of James van Arteveld.

## CHAPTER IX.

Youth and early manhood of James van Arteveld—His Marriage—The Apocryphal Brewery—Consulted by Ghent artisans—Advises a close alliance with England—Appointed Captain of the City—Convention signed at Louvain—Selfishness of the Communes—Louis de Crécy accused of seeking Van Arteveld's death—The Count's flight from Ghent—The Count temporises—Execution of Sohier de Courtrai—Philip de Valois excommunicates Ghent—French invade Flanders—Louis de Maele driven out of Bruges—The Communes organise a local government—Re-open trade with England.

JAMES VAN ARTEVELD is supposed to have been born about the year 1285. The name of Arteveld appears in the local annals as far back as the middle of the twelfth century, and recurs on various occasions. His father Jan, or John, was evidently held in consideration by his fellow-townsmen, for in 1325 he was sent on an embassy to the Duke of Brabant, and thence proceeded to Bruges, where he took a leading part in the negotiations which brought about the release of Louis de Crécy, who had passed eight months in imprisonment at Bruges, almost within sight of his own château. From Bruges John van Arteveld repaired to Arques, where he gave his aid to the conclusion of a treaty of peace, and was commissioned to present himself before Charles the Fair, with instructions to swear to its due observance. The

year previously his name had been inscribed in a list of the wealthy burghers to whom the Count could safely apply for involuntary loans, and he is represented to have advanced the sum of forty livres, or ten more than were demanded of the head of the Vaerne-wyck family, than whom none were more justly reputed in Flanders. The father of his wife, Livine de Groote, had been an *échevin*, and, like himself, was allied with the highest branches of the commercial nobility—the *milites burgenses*, as they were styled in official documents. The appellation of Arteveld\* was derived from the village and fief of that name, which included the fiefs of Triest and Mendonck, and comprised large tracts of wood and marsh, as well as a goodly breadth of cultivable land. Indeed, the *polders* were not so much marsh as land recently recovered from the sea, and which rewarded the care bestowed upon it by yielding luxuriant crops. To John and Livine van Arteveld were born three sons, James, John, and Francis, and two daughters, Mary and Catherine. There is no doubt that John married Christine, daughter of Sohier de Courtrai—described by Meyer as *eques Flandrus nobilissimus*—and there are good grounds for believing that her sister Catherine, was the second, if not the first and only, wife of James van Arteveld, after whose death she may

\* After the defeat of the men of Ghent at Nevele in 1381, Louis de Maele fell back upon the village or township of Arteveld. And in 1385, after ravaging the Pays de Waes, Charles VI. was stopped on his march upon Ghent by sixteen citizens of that town, who barricaded themselves in the tower of Arteveld Church, and held his entire army at bay until battering engines were brought up and the walls demolished.

have married into the house of Baronaige. At the same time, properly to understand the influence wielded by the great Flemish captain, especially in connection with the weavers' guild, it must be borne in mind that his father was actually engaged in business as a cloth-merchant, and that both father and son were inscribed in the registers of that craft. On the other hand, it is stated that the Artevelde were descended from the ancient *châtelains* of Ghent, but in that case James van Arteveld must have invented his own coat of arms, for he bore three hoods *or* on a shield *sable*, or, in the words of Meyer: "*Insignia gessit scutum nigrum in quo tria pilea aurea: pileum antiquitus libertatis symbolum erat.*"

Although not absolutely certain, it is more than probable that at the early age of fifteen, or sixteen, James van Arteveld accompanied his uncle Walter, who was in the personal service of Robert de Béthune, in the expedition conducted by Charles de Valois into Sicily and Greece. It has already been stated that it was in reliance upon a safe-conduct granted by that chivalrous prince that Guy de Dampierre, with his two sons Robert and William, presented himself before Philip the Fair after vainly courting the alliance of Edward I. of England and of the newly-elected Emperor of the West, and that all three were placed in rigorous confinement. Chafing under the slur thus cast upon his honour, Charles de Valois hastily withdrew from France and crossed the Alps into Italy, with the intention of asserting his somewhat mythical rights to the throne of Constantinople. These pretensions were solely based upon the fact that

he had lately married Catherine de Courtenay, niece of Robert de Béthune, and with the aid of the stout heart and strong arm of his wife's uncle, Charles de Valois hoped to make them good. But Philip was not at all minded to assist his brother's enterprise, and positively refused to give liberty to his illustrious prisoners. It may well have happened, however, that some of the Flemish knights and nobles in the suite of Guy de Dampierre volunteered to join a prince who had made himself so popular during the time he acted as his brother's Lieutenant-General of Flanders, and that among these was Walter van Arteveld, who might naturally have taken with him his youthful nephew. Assuming this to have been the case, James van Arteveld must have visited Rome at the time Boniface VIII. filled the Papal throne, and when the struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibelins was at its height. From Italy Charles of Valois passed over into Sicily, and thence set sail for the island of Rhodes.

After the disastrous battle of Courtrai Philip recalled his brother from Greece, and on the accession of Louis X. James van Arteveld is said to have been appointed *Varlet de la Fruiterie* to the king, a purely honorary office, which could be held only by a youth of gentle blood. His father is reported to have died in 1328, at which time James van Arteveld is supposed to have been engaged in cultivating his *polders*, or reclaimed lands, at Basseroode. It is unknown in what year he returned from his wanderings to his native town, nor is there any certainty as to the truth of the legend which gave him for wife a "brewster," not necessarily the widow, though the inheritress, of a brewer of mead

or metheglin. The brewers' guild was one of the fifty-two inferior craft-guilds, but there was nothing discreditable in an opulent weaver, or cloth-merchant, even though a member of the burgher nobility, marrying into a minor guild, and common rumour ascribes to this lady the possession of considerable riches. However that may be, no mention is made of any issue by that marriage, and in 1337 the actual wife of James van Arteveld was, presumably, Catherine, daughter of the gallant knight and respected citizen, Sohier de Courtrai.

It was on a fête-day towards the close of December, 1337, that the artisans of Ghent, driven almost to desperation by their involuntary idleness, were gathered together in groups, bewailing their misery and vainly seeking a remedy, when suddenly some one remembered having heard a wise and discreet man make the remark that, if the people of Flanders would follow his advice, they would soon have all they desired without giving umbrage to the King either of France or of England. These words, passing from mouth to mouth, ran rapidly through the crowd, and presently, as by common consent, they were all shouting: "*Alons, alons oyr le bon conseil du saige homme*"—Come along, let us go and hear the good advice of the wise man. He was found leaning against the door post of his own house—very likely attracted by the sound of the hurried footsteps of a thousand eager and hungering men. From afar, says Froissart, they began taking off their caps and humbly saluting him and praying him to tell them, in their sore distress, what it behoved them to do. They received a kindly and sympathetic

answer for the moment, and were invited to meet the speaker on the morrow at the monastery of Biloke. The interval not only enabled James van Arteveld to arrange in his own mind how far it might be prudent to show his hand, but also gave time to his fellow-citizens to consider the case under all its bearings and to assemble in greater numbers, including the leaders of the different craft-guilds. The monastery of Biloke was under great obligations to Sohier de Courtrai, and was originally founded by the patriotic Canon Fulk Uutenhove, who, in his time, had stirred up the Flemings to resist the usurpation of Philip Augustus.

Accordingly, on the morrow, which may have been the 26th December, 1337, a goodly assemblage of the citizens of Ghent was collected at the appointed hour. To them James van Arteveld expounded, with manly and convincing eloquence, his views on the policy that was likely to be most beneficial to the material interests of Flanders. A solid and substantial alliance with the neighbouring States of Brabant, Hainault, Holland, and Zealand, would enable the allied Communes to maintain a strict neutrality between the Kings of France and England, and would secure a constant and sufficient supply of corn and wine from the former country, and of wool from the latter. Such was the simple and sensible programme sketched by the man whose portraiture has been so unjustly handed down to posterity as that of a self-seeking agitator of the industrial classes. A few days later, on the 3rd of January, 1338, there was a meeting of the Communal magistrates, when it was resolved to revive the old posts of Captains of parishes, which had fallen into



desuetude, and that the Captain of St. John's parish should, as in former times, be considered the President or *Beleeder van de Stad*. As might have been anticipated, James van Arteveld was elected to this honorable office, while his four colleagues were William de Vaernewyck, Gelnot van Leyns, William van Huse, and Peter van den Hove. To each of these magistrates was assigned a small bodyguard of *cnaepen* or constables, charged with the execution of their decrees—to Arteveld 21, to Vaernewyck 20, and to each of the others 15. Two days afterwards Thomas de Vaernewyck, the first *échevin* of the town, published various police regulations, forbidding any one to leave his house after curfew, ordering all those who had been banished by the magistracies of the good towns to leave the country within the space of three days, and limiting the individual consumption of corn in order to diminish the danger of famine in the event of the Count laying siege to Ghent. A truce of fifty days was also proclaimed, during which, it was hoped, private quarrels might be arranged and the entire community inspired with a feeling of mutual loyalty and brotherhood.

Intelligence of these startling proceedings was not long in reaching the ears of Philip, who resolved to crush the seditious spirit in Ghent before it had time to communicate itself to the other towns. Summoning the vassals of the Crown to meet him with their retainers at Amiens, in mid-Lent, he despatched, in the meanwhile, the Bishop of Cambrai to Eecloo, to attend a general assembly of the deputies of the Flemish Communes. The threats, promises, and intrigues, of

the prelate, though warmly seconded by Louis de Crécy, were of no avail, for the destitution of the working classes demanded other remedy than fair words. The Communes had come to understand that their very existence depended upon the cultivation of friendly relations with England, and on the 1st February a deputation of the Ghent magistrates proceeded to Louvain to sign a convention with Edward's plenipotentiary, the Count of Guelders, the immediate result of which was a permission to obtain from Dordrecht a goodly supply of English wool.

According to a manuscript of Froissart's *Chronicles* preserved in the Vatican Library and cited by M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, James van Arteveld, accompanied by deputies from the Communes, crossed over to England in great state, and was entertained by the King and Queen in the palace of Eltham with special honour and consideration. The King's Council subsequently met at Westminster and, after hearing what the deputies had to urge on behalf of their fellow-citizens, promised to comply with their various representations. This incident, however, is omitted from all the other manuscripts, and yet it is hard to imagine that it should have been either invented by Froissart or related to him by an inaccurate informant, though, on the other hand, no notice of it appears in the English narratives of Edward's reign. It is more to the point to draw attention to the patient sagacity with which the English monarch put up with the intense selfishness of the Flemish deputies, who agreed to only one condition imposed by the Count of Guelders, and even that one they made advantageous to

themselves. They had, in fact, only one object in view. They cared nothing for the disputes of Kings and princes, provided the raw material of their chief industry arrived without let or hindrance, and equal facility of transport was secured for the product of their looms. They insisted, therefore, upon their neutrality being respected and, as they dared not refuse to sanction the march of English troops across the territories of their Count, they stipulated that these should pay in current coin for everything of which they stood in need, and that they should conduct themselves with as much restraint as if they were in their own country. The rights of their Count were specially reserved, and at that time they formally recognised Philip de Valois as their overlord in virtue of his royal prerogative as King of France. To a less far-seeing prince than Edward III. such a treaty would have appeared scarcely worth the parchment upon which it was engrossed, but, for the moment, he was only anxious to conciliate the good will of the Communes, rightly judging that neither their Count nor the French monarch would leave them in peace, while the dread of their coasts being ravaged by his fleets and of the prohibition of the export of wool to Flanders would compel them to seek a closer alliance on terms more favourable to himself.

Unable openly to oppose these proceedings, Louis de Crécy invited James van Arteveld to a private conference, with the imputed intention of causing him to be assassinated. According to the Valenciennes manuscript—quoted by M. de Lettenhove—the Count was urged by his usual advisers to kill him “secretly

or otherwise," while the Amiens manuscript asserts that it was the King of France who "enjoined the Count of Flanders not, on any account, to let this Jacquemon Dartevelle act the part of a King or even live." In any case, Arteveld presented himself with such a numerous accompaniment of the citizens of Ghent that no opportunity was afforded for assassination, and if any act of violence was perpetrated it was by the hand of Van Arteveld himself. Meyer distinctly affirms that in the presence of the Count he slew one of his personal friends named Fulk, or Folkard de Roden, but then he goes on to say that Van Arteveld blockaded the Count in a fortified house known as the Steen—in which prisoners were confined. As the latter statement is incorrect, the former may be so likewise, and Professor Lenz denies that Van Arteveld was even in Ghent at the time the nobleman in question was assassinated. The danger alleged to have been incurred by their Captain-General moved the magistrates of Ghent to increase his bodyguard to the unprecedented number of twenty-eight *cnaepen*, and at the same time all the members of the Commune assumed a white hood as was their wont in times of trouble. The Count was weak enough to follow their example, but, his sincerity being justly suspected, his position became extremely uncomfortable and even hazardous. Under these circumstances he called to his aid his habitual dissimulation, and invited the ladies of Ghent to a banquet that was spoken of as likely to be very magnificent. On the day, however, that the entertainment was appointed to take place, the Count, after hearing Mass, expressed a

fancy to fly a hawk, and mounting his horse rode away to Bruges, and left his guests to their disappointment.

As Philip's preparations for an invasion were still incomplete, Louis de Crécy affected to make light of the constraint he had suffered at the hands of the men of Ghent, and even ratified the Convention arranged with the Count of Guelders. To foster the jealousy that usually divided the citizens of Bruges from those of Ghent, he lavished various privileges upon the former, and generally comported himself as though he desired nothing so much as to live on good terms with his own people. The King of Bohemia, however, who represented Philip de Valois at Eecloo, had imprudently uttered some words which caused his hearers much anxiety, so that two notable personages of Ghent were deputed to wait upon the King of France and assure him of the loyalty and frank submission of its inhabitants. The deputies were graciously received and were bidden to fear nothing, for it was the King's pleasure to protect the liberties and promote the interests of their town. With this message they returned to those who sent them, and the citizens of Ghent, relieved from all misgivings, resigned themselves to the enjoyment of the coarse pleasures of a Flemish kermesse, intensified by the great fair held on *Lætare* Sunday, which was always marked by the presence of a large number of merchants and traders from foreign parts.

In the midst of their noisy gaiety a dreadful rumour got abroad, and chilled every heart with horror and consternation. In compliance with the mandate of the

King of France, Louis de Crécy had given orders, only too readily executed, that the venerable Sohier de Courtrai should be put to death; and his head was cut off while he was lying in bed, worn out by age, grief, and bodily ailments. On the very day after his execution, the 24th March, 1338, were received Royal letters, dated a fortnight previously, enjoining the inhabitants of Ghent to destroy their fortifications with the greatest possible despatch in conformity with the stipulations of the treaty of Athies, signed by Robert de Béthune, at the instance of Philip the Fair, and summoning the Count, nobles, and Communes of Flanders to compel their obedience. On that same day, likewise, the Bishop of Senlis and the Abbot of St. Denis pronounced a sentence of excommunication in the market place at Tournai, without waiting to learn how far the citizens of Ghent might be disposed to yield to the force of circumstances. Nor was Philip contented with merely hurling the thunders of the Church and terrifying the superstitious. By the 9th April he had joined the Constable at Tournai, expecting an easy victory over the townspeople deprived of the religious functions pertaining to Passion Week, and fearing the wrath of an offended Deity not less than the outstretched arm of their aggrieved overlord. But he had reckoned without taking into account the moral ascendancy already acquired by James van Arteveld. As *Beleeder van de Stad*, his first step was to appeal to the Pope against the interdict launched by Philip on his own authority, and at the same time to consult the high dignitaries of the Cathedral of Liège as to the means to be adopted in mitigation of



this dread calamity. Having done so much to relieve the affrighted consciences of the timid, he applied himself to defensive preparations, and inspired the townsfolk with something of his own high courage and tenacity of purpose. Towards evening on Holy Thursday, April the 11th, a straggling body of horsemen were descried from the steeple of St. Nicholas' Church, reconnoitring up to the very gates of the town, and straightway the big bell, named Roelandt,\* rang out the tocsin from the belfry tower.

Irresolute at the moment of action, Philip hesitated to set his army in motion, and allowed ten precious days to elapse before he broke up his head-quarters at Tournai. In the interval, Van Arteveld had demolished the bridge over the Lys at Deynze, and the swollen river presented an impassable barrier. Availing himself of this respite the Captain of the City suggested an expedition against Biervliet, where a large body of Leliaerds had assembled after their defeat at Cadzand, and were watching for an opportunity to co-operate with the French troops. The proposition was joyfully accepted, and all day long the spirit-stirring notes of the trumpet called out the

\* On this bell were engraven the well-known lines :

"Ik heete Roelandt ; als ik klippe (a) dan ist brand ;  
Als ik luye, dan ist sturm in 't Vlaenderland."

Roland am I hight ; when I call out there is fire ;  
When I bellow there is storm in the Flanders-land.

(a) Compare,

"Clepe at his door, or knockë with a stone."

Again,

"Then will I clepe, How Alison ? How John ?"

—*The Miller's Tale.*



Ghent militia to gather together under the banners of their respective parishes on the Cauter,\* or Place of Arms. On the following morning the chief magistrates and captains of parishes followed the Beleeder van de Stad with a goodly band of armed men, and with engines for battering the walls.

While the citizens of Ghent were engaged on this expedition, Louis de Crécy imagined that a good opportunity presented itself for subduing to his will the town of Bruges, especially as many of the more opulent burghers were well disposed towards him. Accordingly, at the head of a considerable body of his retainers, he rode into Bruges and planted his banner in the Market Place. Exasperated by this encroachment on their Communal privileges, the fullers rushed to arms, and being speedily joined by the other guilds, the Count, after a slight skirmish, was obliged to retire to Maele. Very shortly after his expulsion, James van Arteveld arrived victorious from his enterprise against Biervliet, and was welcomed with acclamations. A meeting of deputies from Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, and the Franc† was held in

\* The Cauter—*quasi, cultura*—was an open space, varying in extent, the last relic of the agricultural condition of Flanders before the bulk of its most industrious inhabitants became agglomerated in towns. By the fourteenth century in most towns the Cauter had been built over, but not so in Ghent.—“*Le Siècle des Artevelde*,” ch. x. p. 370.

† Colonel Johnes quotes as follows from Baudran’s “*Dictionnaire Geographique*” :—“*Le Franc, Franconatus, Terra Franca*. It is part of French Flanders, and was yielded to the French by the peace of the Pyrenees; it comprehends the bailiwicks of Bourbourg, Bergues, St. Winoc, and Furnes, and, besides the capital towns of these bailiwicks, those of Dunkirk and Gravelines.”

the monastery of Eeckhout, at which it was agreed that a permanent Commission, or Board, should be appointed, consisting of three representatives of each of the three good towns, to whom should be confided the general administration of the County of Flanders. On the 29th April delegates from the different Communes waited upon the Count, and submitted for his ratification the Resolutions that had been passed at Eeckhout, to which, with characteristic insincerity, he at once gave his assent, and he further swore to maintain the Communal liberties as they existed prior to the treaty of Athies. In the course of the following month James van Arteveld and William de Vaernewyck, accompanied by deputies from Bruges and Ypres, traversed Flanders in all directions, labouring energetically, and not without success, to appease local rivalries and ill-feeling, and to bring about a thorough reconciliation between the Count and his subjects. The Board also met frequently in different places, striving earnestly to execute Van Arteveld's programme of internal tranquillity, combined with neutrality towards all foreign Powers.

With this arrangement Edward III. professed to be perfectly contented, and wrote letters in that sense to the municipal magistrates of the three good towns, announcing at the same time the departure of his ambassadors, the Bishop of Lincoln and the Earls of Northampton and Suffolk, for Brabant. These envoys were met at Antwerp by the representatives of the Communes, and on the 10th of June, 1338, a commercial treaty was signed which fully recognised the neutrality of Flanders, though English ships of war

were permitted to anchor in Flemish waters during the space of one tide, provided no armed men were disembarked or allowed to land. The Flemish merchants were empowered to purchase English wools at any accredited wool-staple in Brabant, Zealand, or elsewhere, while the burghers of Ghent received further permission to import their fabrics into England, if impressed with the city seal, free of duty and examination. On the other hand, the Count of Flanders retained his liberty to serve with his immediate retainers in any country and against any enemy he pleased. Not to be outbidden by the English monarch, Philip de Valois acquiesced in this treaty, and acquitted the Communes of the heavy fines which had been imposed upon them under various pretexts. He also addressed a letter to the magistrates of Ghent in which he expressed much compassion for the sufferings of the poor, and promised to forgive the ignorant multitude the misdeeds and contemptuous language into which they might have fallen through simplicity or misguidance. As a conclusive test of his friendliness, he despatched the Bishop of Senlis to Ghent, on the 25th July, to raise the sentence of interdict, and a few days later Louis de Crécy set out for Tournai, in company with the Flemish deputies, to celebrate the feast of the Assumption in that border town.

## CHAPTER X.

Edward III. appointed Vicar of the Holy Roman Empire—Popularity of the English in Brabant—The Count's narrow escape at Dixmude—Siege of Cambrai—Edward III. offers battle to Philip de Valois—Both armies withdraw into winter quarters—Fighting on the borders—Barbarity of mediæval warfare—Edward III. claims the Crown of France—Quarters the Fleurs-de-Lys on his shield—Grants three charters to the Communes—Alliance between Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault—Papal intervention.

IN the meantime Edward III. had wrung from the English parliament a grant of 20,000 sacks of wool to be delivered in Antwerp, and which were likely to be more efficacious even than gold in quickening the slow pulses of the peoples dwelling in the Low Countries. On the 12th July he embarked with his Queen Philippa, and a gallant suite of the noblest and bravest knights of England, and a week afterwards entered the spacious harbour of the Zwyn. James van Arteveld and the other deputies of the Communes awaited him at Sluys, and assured him of their good faith and friendship. Forced to content himself with empty words, the King of England continued his voyage to Antwerp, where he arrived earlier than the sacks of wool. Without these sinews of war he was powerless. His allies would do nothing unless their subsidies were paid in advance. The Duke of Brabant,

who played fast and loose throughout, declined to commit himself single-handed, while the Communes persisted in their neutrality, and wanted nothing from England but the wool of her sheep. Roused to greater activity by each fresh obstacle in his path, Edward hastened into Germany, and by forcible importunity extorted from his brother-in-law, Louis of Bavaria, the designation of Vicar of the Empire.\*

What chiefly prompted the Emperor to take this step was his invincible indolence and consequent aversion from war. The King of France had possessed himself of Cambrai, an acknowledged fief of the Empire, and refused to restore it except to superior force. To lose such an important town without striking one blow, or shivering a single lance, would have been an indelible disgrace, and might have weakened the Imperial hold on other outlying appanages. The application of the English monarch was therefore opportune and agreeable, as the consequence of failure would affect only those who were actually engaged in hostilities. With becoming pomp and ceremony Edward III. was proclaimed Vicar-General, and one of his first acts was to summon the Count of Flanders to appear before him to do homage for the lands he held of the Empire.

\* It must be borne in mind that Flanders was then held under three lords. There was Flanders *sous l'empire*, or dependent on the Emperor of the West, of which Cambrai was the principal city; secondly, Flanders *sous la couronne*, or dependent on the King of France, which included all the free Communes under the Count; and thirdly, allodial Flanders, or the Count's personal military fief. Edward accordingly aimed at uniting under his own overlordship Imperial Flanders, in his capacity of Vicar-General of the Empire, French Flanders as King of France, and allodial Flanders as the Count's suzerain.

He also arranged with his German allies that they should be prepared three weeks after the feast of St. John—Midsummer-day, 1339—to undertake the siege of Cambrai. That winter was passed by the King of England and his royal consort at Louvain, and so nobly did the English knights conduct themselves that, as Froissart tells us, “they were beloved by those of both sexes, and even by the common people, who were pleased with their state and magnificence.” The Communes, notwithstanding the most dazzling offers, refused to betray their neutrality, though individuals—the Bardi of Bruges, among others—were willing to advance large sums of money on the security of the English Crown jewels.

While Edward was wasting much valuable time in Brabant, conformably with the old practice of suspending military operations during the winter months, Louis de Crécy formed a project for breaking the power of the Communes before aid could be rendered by their English and German allies. Organizing a band of Leliaerds, he directed them to commence their enterprise in the territory of the Franc, because between that semi-rural population and the citizens of the larger towns there had long existed a feeling of jealous repulsion. His adherents accordingly began by surprising Bergues, where they put to death twenty-five of the principal inhabitants. Thence they hastened to Dixmude, where they were joined by the Count in person. Under the impression that the Bruges militia were engaged under the walls of the castle of Liedekerke on the frontiers of Brabant, into which a party of Leliaerds had thrown themselves,



the Count proposed to make a dash at that town, and seize upon it in the absence of its defenders. The men of Bruges, however, were already on their return to their homes, when they were apprized of Louis' intended treachery. While he and his knights were buried in sleep, the alarm was given that the Bruges militia were close at hand, and the Count and his partisans had barely time to effect their escape by forcing open one of the gates, and galloping off to St. Omer. The magistrates of Bruges thereupon complained to their over-lord of the disloyalty of his vassal, their Count, and were promised ample protection and the undisturbed enjoyment of their liberties, though Philip only awaited a convenient season for depriving them of all their privileges and of reducing them to subjection. The apparent credulity with which the Communes on all occasions accepted the fair words of the Kings of France can only be compared with the unscrupulous facility with which those kings violated their engagements.

The summer season was well nigh over before Edward's German allies were ready to take the field. At last he was able to set his army in motion and to lay siege to Cambrai. About the middle of October, however, he received intelligence that Philip was approaching with forces numerically superior to his own. Nothing daunted, he at once broke up the siege and advanced to give battle to the enemy, though the Count of Hainault refused to serve against his French over-lord in France, and actually ranged his contingent under Philip's banner. On the 23rd October, the allied army was drawn up in battle array



on a wide plain between the villages of Vironfosse or Buironfosse and La Flamengerie; but Philip was never anxious to engage unless morally certain of victory. In the present instance he distrusted his own French Communes, and may also have been aware that the Flemish militia under James van Arteveld and a son or grandson of John Breydel, the Butcher of Bruges, were within striking distance. He, therefore, prudently fell back under cover of night, partly owing to a letter received from Robert King of Sicily, an astrologer of great repute, who had cast the nativities of the two rival monarchs and had discovered through his knowledge of the heavenly bodies that, if ever Philip encountered Edward in battle, he would surely be defeated. Availing himself of this excuse, he fell back to St. Quentin, and finally, disbanding his army at St. Omer, returned to Paris. Instead of pressing upon his retreating enemy and harassing his rear, the King of England and the Duke of Brabant "packed up their baggage," says Froissart, and took up their quarters in and around Avesnes in Hainault, whence the former proceeded to Brussels, and the Germans returned to their homes.

As soon as the allied forces had sat down before Cambrai, the Flemish militia took up an excellent position between Menin and Deynze, with the intention of making a point at Douai, and subsequently at Lille and Béthune. But once more they allowed themselves to be cajoled by their Count, who invited them to meet him at Courtrai and receive Philip's assent to all their demands. With characteristic

fickleness and narrow selfishness, they desisted from active enterprise and suffered themselves to be deluded with idle promises and professions, until news arrived that Edward had gone into winter-quarters, when the Count suddenly took his departure without having committed himself to anything. The French garrisons in the frontier towns amused themselves thenceforth by making forays into Flemish territory, killing the villagers, burning their hovels, and devastating the country.

The horrors of war, as depicted by Froissart, illustrate the inhumanity of the mediæval ages, despite their boasted chivalry. It is in these terms the Canon of Chimay describes the results of an excursion into Hainault hazarded by the garrison of Cambrai, who made their first attack upon the open unfortified town of Haspres. "The French, on entering the town, found everyone within doors. Having taken and pillaged what they pleased, they burnt the town so completely that nothing but the walls remained. In Haspres there was a priory of black monks that was dependent on that of St. Waas, in Arras; the monastery was extensive, and had large buildings belonging to it, which they also pillaged and burnt most villainously." By way of reprisal the Hainaulters consigned Auberton to the flames, after making 2000 men prisoners and driving off many cartloads of plundered property. At another time we read that "the French made a great booty, and burnt the town of Anich, one half of Escoux, Escaudaing, Erin, Montigny, Sautain, Varlain, Vargny, Ambreticourt, Laurche, Sauch, Roelt, Neuville, Lieu St.

Amand, and all the villages which were in that country. They carried off with them immense riches.” During the siege of Tournai some soldiers surprised the town of Hasnon “which belonged to Hainault, burnt the town, violated the nunnery, destroyed the monastery, and took with them all they could carry off.” Then the troops under the Duke of Normandy, “burnt Main and Fontenelles, and also the convent which belonged to Madame de Valois, sister-german to the King of France. The Duke was much vexed at this, and had those who set it on fire hanged”—not because of their barbarity, but because they had impaired the revenues of his Royal aunt. So it is throughout, without the slightest expression of horror and disgust from the gentle historian, a poet as well as a chronicler. No doubt, “it was a fine sight to see the banners and pennons flying in the plain, the barbed horses, the knights and esquires richly armed,” but how was it with the ill-fed, ill-armed, ill-clad, and wholly unprotected men on foot, who had to march and fight and suffer without gain or glory?

The treachery of Louis de Crécy at Courtrai, followed by the ravages of the French garrisons, at length opened the eyes of the Communes to the hollowness of their neutrality and the danger of their position between two rival monarchs, one of whom at least was their implacable oppressor. But, as King of France, he was also their over-lord, and under the most trying circumstances they strove to preserve their loyalty. Man for man, they preferred Edward III. to Philip de Valois, but before they could transfer their allegiance to the former it was neces-

sary that he should be, or assume to be, king of France. It is commonly affirmed, and probably with truth, that it was at the suggestion of Van Arteveld that he and certain other deputies were instructed to proceed to Brussels and there greet Edward as lord of the two kingdoms. They appear to have expressed their readiness to serve under him to the best of their ability, provided he would quarter the arms of France with those of England, and call himself King of that country. Otherwise, however great their goodwill towards him, they would forfeit the sum of two millions of florins to the Apostolical Chamber, besides incurring a sentence of excommunication, if they acted offensively against the King of France for the time being. Edward is represented to have been somewhat startled at this proposition, seeing that "he had not conquered any part of that kingdom, and it was uncertain whether he ever should; on the other hand, he was unwilling to lose the aid and assistance of the Flemings, who could be of greater service to him than any others at that period." In the end, by the advice of the lords of the Empire, Edward acceded to this novel proposition and engaged to restore to Flanders the bailiwicks of Lille, Douai, and Béthune, provided they, on their parts, would render him substantial aid, in enforcing his claims to the throne of France.

Early in November the King proceeded to Ghent, where a great council was held of the German feudatories and the representatives of the Flemish Communes, and ever after Edward bore the arms of France and the title of King of that

country. Leaving Queen Philippa at Ghent, "where she was often visited and comforted by Jacob van Arteveld and other lords and ladies," Edward repaired to Antwerp and shortly afterwards took ship for London, "where he arrived about St. Andrew's day, 1339, and was joyfully received by his subjects, who were anxious for his return." Previous to his departure from Antwerp he commissioned certain lords to negotiate the betrothal of his daughter, Isabella, to the youthful Louis de Maele, but the Count rejected his overtures and remained faithful to his liege lord.

On the 23rd January, 1340, Edward was once more in Ghent. His seal was now engraved with the motto "*Dieu et Mon Droit*," and the fleurs de lys of France were quartered on his shield with the leopards of England. Three days later he began his reign as King of France by granting a charter, "*dat. apud Gandavum vicesimo sexto die Januarii, anno regni nostri Franciæ primo.*" The Flemings who had been taken prisoners at Cadzand were set at liberty without ransom, not excepting Louis' half brother, Guy, and three charters, or proclamations, were successively issued by Edward. By the first he undertook to protect the ships of the Flemish merchants, to allow their fabrics free circulation in England, to establish a permanent staple of wool in Flanders and in Brabant, and to accept as obligatory in England commercial conventions made in Flanders under the seal of the good towns. He also promised to acquaint the Communes with any negotiations that might be set on foot by which their interests might be affected,

and not to conclude any treaty of peace with Philip de Valois, unless with their cognizance and assent, the Court of Flanders being at liberty to join them. He further pledged himself and his successors to succour and aid the Communes should their laws and franchises ever chance to be endangered, and to fight in their defence to the bitter end.

By the second instrument the English monarch engaged to assemble his naval forces in such strength that the navigation of the Channel should be secure for the trading-vessels of all friendly nations. Two-thirds of the fighting men on board his ships should be men of Flanders and Brabant, but the entire charges were, as usual, to be borne by England. Moreover, the sum of £140,000 was to be paid in four instalments to the Communes—probably in payment of loans—and for the next fifteen years a wool-staple was to be fixed at Bruges. The third proclamation was practically a charter conferred by the new self-styled King of France upon his faithful feudatories the Communes of Flanders. The privilege of excommunication without previous reference to the Papal See was renounced for ever, and the Count and the inhabitants of the country were declared to be thenceforth as free as their predecessors before any such penalties and servitudes were enjoined. The towns and bailiwicks of Lille, Douai, Béthune, and Orchies were restored to Flanders as an integral and inseparable portion of Flemish territory. In like manner the county of Artois and the town of Tournai were to be regarded as a fief of the Court of Flanders. All privileges granted by Robert de Béthune after the Battle of the



Spurs were confirmed. No taxes were to be imposed on Flanders, nor could any duties be levied upon goods imported from France into Flanders or Brabant. Every Fleming had a right to be tried by Flemish judges, nor could he be summoned to appear before any French court. A good, loyal, and common gold and silver currency of the same weight and alloy, was to circulate in France, Flanders, and Brabant, and was to be accepted in England, and it was never to be changed or tampered with.

It is not surprising that modern Flemish writers should give great credit to James van Arteveld for obtaining such favourable terms from the new claimant of the French Crown; but it is extremely unlikely that Edward, as King of France, would have fulfilled the conditions he signed when simply an aspirant to that high dignity. And he might readily enough have found an excuse in the stipulations made by the men of Bruges, who reserved to themselves liberty to change sides should any flaw be discovered in Edward's pretensions—the worst flaw, of course, being inability to enforce his alleged rights. They further insisted upon maintaining their feudal position towards their Count, so long as he respected their ancient franchises, for, they said, “it ever was, is, and will be their intention to lend their aid to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity, and to the leading of an honest life, injuring no one, but rendering to each his due”—and, they might have added, thinking only of their own immediate commercial interests. The gross selfishness and inconstancy of the Communes completely alienated Edward after the death of his



“gossip” Van Arteveld, and the woolstaple was after a while taken from Bruges, while Flemish artizans were lured to settle in England.

Through the intervention of James van Arteveld a close alliance of friendship had been concluded between the Communes of Flanders and Brabant on the 3rd December, 1339, by which they promised each other mutual support against all enemies, and engaged their respective lords to abstain from all wars in the future unless with the previous approval of the two countries. Free trade and a common currency were agreed upon; and in the event of any disputes arising, the matter at issue was to be referred in the first instance to the local magistrates, and, if they failed to render justice within the space of eight days, it was to be laid before a Council of ten members, of whom four were to be nominated by the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Flanders, and the six others by the good towns of Brabant and Flanders, namely, Louvain, Brussels, and Antwerp in the one, and Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres in the other. Finally, it was arranged that the two princes and deputies from the above-named six towns should meet in conference three times in the year; to wit, on the fourteenth day after Candlemas at Ghent; on the fourteenth day after the Nativity of St. John the Baptist at Brussels; and on the fourteenth day after All Saints at Alost. This important document, with which the Count and Communes of Hainault shortly afterwards expressed their concurrence, bore the signatures of eighty barons, knights, and deputies, and had no other fault than its dependence on the life of a single individual, for

shortly after the death of Van Arteveld the edifice he had laboured to construct fell to the ground. It may also have been due to his suggestion that, on the 8th February, 1340, Edward published a Manifesto addressed to his French subjects, in which he promised to restore their communal rights and privileges, and to revive the laws and customs which had existed in the time of his sainted ancestor King Louis IX.

It would have been strange if the Papal See had abstained from availing itself of this opportunity of interfering in the temporal affairs of two such powerful monarchs as Philip and Edward. Letters were accordingly addressed by Benedict XII. to the Communes, reminding them that their prosperity greatly depended upon the favour and protection of the King of France, and that whenever they had presumed to revolt from their over-lord their sufferings had been very serious. These letters, however, arrived too late to be of any use one way or the other, for Edward III. had already been recognised as King of France. By way of reply, therefore, Baldwin de Lisseweghe was commissioned to proceed to Avignon, and demand the rescission of the singular privilege accorded to the French King of excommunicating the people of Flanders without reference to the head of the Christian Church. Edward had voluntarily renounced this power, but Popes have usually paid more court to Kings *in esse* than to those *in posse*, and Benedict XII. acted after the manner of his predecessors and successors. He hesitated to forward a safe conduct to the Flemish deputation, nor is there anything to show

that he ever accorded an interview to Baldwin de Lisseweghe and his companions. To Edward himself, indeed, he wrote a paternal letter, pointing out that he could have no claim to the Crown of France through his mother, because women do not count in the hereditary order of succession, and that France was not a country to be conquered by force of arms. No reliance should be placed upon the Flemings, a fickle and unfaithful race, constantly at feud with their natural lords, while the Germans would help him only so long as there was money to be wrung from him. Edward's justification of his conduct never reached Avignon, being intercepted by Philip's agents, but the quarrel between the two Kings had got far beyond the sphere of argument, and both sides prepared for a final appeal to arms. The English Parliament, indeed, and more particularly the Corporation of London, demurred to the privileges conferred upon the Flemings; but Edward, in his masterful way, declared that he would sooner forfeit his Crown and repudiate his royal birth, than be untrue to his engagements. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen, finding that nothing they could say would shake his resolution, wisely bowed to the force of circumstances.

## CHAPTER XI.

Birth of John of Gaunt and of Philip van Arteveld—Defeat and capture of the Earl of Salisbury—James van Arteveld marches to the relief of the Count of Hainault—Battle of Sluys—Van Arteveld joins Edward III. at Ardenburg—Accompanies him to Bruges—The French and English kings issue proclamations—Siege of Tournai—Use of Artillery—Truce of Esplechin—Armies disbanded—Favourable terms granted to the Communes—The Count grants an amnesty—Financial embarrassment of Edward III.—Obtains a loan through Van Arteveld—Further negotiations.

EDWARD had promised to return to Flanders not later than midsummer. During his absence in England Queen Philippa gave birth to a son, afterwards known as John of Gaunt, "time-honour'd Lancaster," and held at the baptismal font the eldest son of James van Arteveld and Catherine of Courtrai, who was named Philip, after his Royal sponsor. Of him more will be heard hereafter in its proper place.

On his part Philip de Valois had not been idle. An interdict was fulminated against the Flemish Communes at Tournai, on the 4th April, by the Bishop of Senlis and the Abbot of St. Denis; and in the evening of the same day a detachment from the garrison of that town went forth on a successful raid to the very suburbs of Courtrai. A second incursion narrowly escaped disaster, and on the Friday previous

to Palm Sunday the Militia of the Communes, under the personal command of the Captain-General of Ghent, occupied the villages of Chin and Ramegnies, in the immediate neighbourhood of Tournai. Van Arteveld had formed the design of recovering that town with the aid of a small body of English men-at-arms whom Edward had left behind him at Ypres with the Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk. His request for their co-operation obtained a ready assent, and the citizens of Ypres, under their local magistrates, swelled the contingent. Unhappily, the latter prevailed upon their English comrades to assist them in expelling from Armentières a Genoese garrison who were in the habit of plundering the surrounding country. The Italians offered a gallant resistance, but the place was at last carried by assault and burnt to the ground. Emboldened by this prosperous commencement, the victors conceived the mad project of making themselves masters of Lille. Instead, therefore, of prosecuting their march in security along the left bank of the Lys, they pushed across country in disorder, and were approaching the abbey of Marquette by a narrow road between high hedges, when they were suddenly attacked in front and on both flanks and speedily overpowered. The Earl of Salisbury was taken prisoner and conveyed to the Châtelet at Paris, while Van Arteveld was compelled to raise the siege of Tournai and return to Ghent. Shortly afterwards, however, he proceeded at the head of 60,000 men to relieve Edward's brother-in-law, the Count of Hainault, whose territories were being overrun and ravaged by Philip's eldest son, the Duke of Normandy. Had it rested

with the Count and his gallant Flemish allies the French army would have been attacked with great advantage, but the Duke of Brabant, jealous of the growing ascendancy of Flanders and anxious to keep on good terms with the French monarch, refused to co-operate, and news arrived which prompted the Duke of Normandy to beat a hasty retreat.

Aware that Edward had pledged his faith and honour to be in Flanders on St. John's day, and that he would redeem his word at any cost, Philip de Valois collected a fleet of 800 sail to intercept him, including 30 Genoese galleys under the command of a Corsair named Barbavara, and 140 large vessels equipped at Calais and in the ports of Normandy. This formidable fleet carried on board 35,000 armed men, but the supreme command had been intrusted to Nicholas Béhuchet, the King's treasurer, who had expressed a wish to be present at a battle. On the 8th June the French fleet entered the Zwyn and took up a position behind the dunes, or embankments of sand which keep out the sea, in the hope that Edward III. would make for Sluys without suspicion, and would be surrounded by a greatly superior force before he was prepared to defend himself. But Béhuchet began with a fatal error. Landing a body of troops on the island of Cadzand he set fire to all the buildings it contained, and put even the unarmed inhabitants to the sword. This barbarous act roused the country against him, and the Bruges militia hastened to protect Sluys against a similar outrage. Two days afterwards the news reached the Orwell, where the King of England was completing his pre-



parations for his departure, which was fixed for the 12th June. At first he refused to credit the tidings which were brought to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he rudely taunted with cowardice, bidding him remain at home if he had any fear. The unwelcome intelligence, however, was speedily corroborated by a pilot who had witnessed with his own eyes the arrival of the French fleet. Even then Edward withheld his belief, but when letters were handed to him from the Count of Guelders, he consented to postpone his departure for a few days until a larger force could be assembled. As soon as 300 vessels, mostly inferior to the French ships, were collected at the mouth of the Orwell, he set sail for Flanders, and on the following day, the 23rd June, was off the Flemish coast.

At Blankenberghe three knights went ashore and presently sighted a forest of masts in the arm of the sea known as the Zwyn. On receiving this information the English fleet anchored for the night, but at daybreak on St. John's day, 1340, anchors were raised and all sail set for the mouth of that estuary. Both wind and tide, however, were adverse and no progress could be made. All at once the Genoese galleys were descried making for the open sea. Having in vain pointed out to Nicholas Béhuchet that by being crowded up in such a narrow space he lost the advantage of his numerical superiority, Barbavara determined to consult his own safety by securing ample sea-room, and sallying forth, bravely attacked the English fleet. At first his onslaught was successful, and he had already cap-



tured a large ship, when the King rallied his broken squadrons and speedily compelled the Genoese to take to flight. By that time the tide had well turned, and on the rising flood the English ships floated into the Zwyn. With besotted self-confidence Béhuchet now gave orders to his captains to let go the chains by which their vessels had previously been attached to one another, and to fight every man for his own hand. The French fleet thus became inextricably confused and entangled. Two mighty ships, the *Christopher* and the *Edward*, which had been captured from the English while conveying cargoes of wool across the Channel, were the first prizes of that glorious day, but the heavy armed men on board were massacred by the peasants as they strove to gain the shore. Presently, the loud braying of horns announced the arrival of useful auxiliaries. A swarm of small vessels issued from every creek, while the ports of Bruges and Damme sent to the affray every ship not still encumbered with merchandise. The English monarch, in his letter to the Prince of Wales, gratefully acknowledged the assistance rendered by the Flemings, who seem to have given no quarter. Though wounded by an arrow in the thigh, Edward bore himself like a valiant knight, and was conspicuous among the flower of the English chivalry. According to Froissart, none of the French escaped the terrible slaughter that ensued, nor does he, as usual, mention the names of any persons who were made prisoners and held to ransom. On the contrary, he explains as a reason for the greater fury and loss of life that characterise naval combats as compared with those on land, that there is no possi-

bility of retreat—every man must do or die. It is, however, improbable that many nobles or knights of high degree would have consented to serve under Hugh Quiéret, a simple knight of Artois, or under the King's treasurer, a man of humble extraction raised to eminence by his clerkly qualifications. The contest lasted for several hours, from morn to noon, and as the fighting was hand to hand on crowded decks, soon slippery with human blood, the carnage may well have been exceedingly great.\* Hugh Quiéret had the good fortune to meet with a soldier's death, but Béhuchet fell into the hands of the Flemish peasants who hanged him from a masthead in revenge for the devastation of Cadzand.

This was the first great naval battle won by the English, and for a brief space it gave them the command of the Channel. On the morrow Queen Philippa arrived from Ghent to congratulate and nurse her wounded lord, who was unable for a few days to leave his ship. It is reported that the king asked after his "gossip," James van Arteveld, and was informed that he was then at Thun-l'Evêque, at the head of 60,000

\* In an article on "Jacob van Arteveld, the Brewer of Ghent," in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 313, it is stated that "3,000 of the enemy perished by the sword or by drowning," but this is, clearly, a clerical error for 30,000. The loss of the victors has been estimated at 4,000; though, of course, too great importance must not be attached to the figured statements of the old chroniclers, any more than to French or Russian bulletins in the present century. In the "*Cronique de Flandres*," ch. lxxviii., it is thus written: "La avoit tant de gens tués que la mer en estoit toute ensanglantée en ce lez; et estimoit on bien les mors à trente mille." Mr. Longman is content with 25,000, but the ancient writers vary from 30,000 to 35,000.

Flemish militia, in defence of the territories of the Count of Hainault. This answer, however, was not strictly true, for he was then actually at Valenciennes, in company of that Count and the double-faced Duke of Brabant. Froissart, who appears to have been, though quite a little child, an eye-witness of the scene, describes how Arteveld mounted a platform in the market-place, and expounded the right of Edward III. to the crown of France, and also the common advantages of a close alliance between Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault, with such commanding eloquence that those who heard him said one to another that he was indeed worthy to govern the land. The two princes then agreed to meet again at Ghent, and on the 30th June Van Arteveld was at Ardenburg, whither the King of England had gone on a pilgrimage to return thanks for his great victory. Thence they proceeded together to Bruges, where Edward received the freedom of the city. Deputies of the different Communes also waited upon him, and urged him to undertake the siege of Tournai and the recovery of the County of Artois, promising on their part to furnish 100,000 men for the former enterprise, and 50,000 for the latter. And so faithfully did they perform their part of the engagement, that in the space of five days they had 140,000 men under arms, all of them volunteers, serving at their own charges. By the 15th July the militia of Bruges and Ghent were marching, some towards Oudenaerd, some towards West Flanders, where they expected to form a junction with the contingents from Ypres and the Franc. The newly-elected Rewaert was Simon de Mirabel, lord of Beveren,

Halle, and Perwez, whose wife was Elizabeth of Flanders, daughter of Louis de Nevers, and sister to Louis de Crécy.

The defeat of his fleet at Sluys caused Philip de Valois to fall back upon Arras, after leaving a very strong garrison in Tournai under the command of the Constable of France, supported by many valiant knights and lords. He also threw a considerable body of troops, under experienced commanders, into St. Omer, while he himself kept the field at the head of 70,000 men, encamped between Lens and Arras. The campaign opened badly for both belligerents. The Duke of Burgundy, having rashly attacked the entrenched camp occupied by the Bruges militia under Robert of Artois, was repulsed with heavy loss, and pursued to the very gates of St. Omer, which the victors proposed to carry by storm at dawn of the following day. The men of Ypres, however, had been less successful than their comrades, and in their flight had spread a panic through the ranks of the Franc militia. Nothing, therefore, remained for the brave citizens of Bruges but to follow the fugitives, while the Count in disgust proceeded to the English camp, which was then pitched under the walls of Tournai.

After the manner of those times Edward III. had sent a personal challenge to the King of France, and informed him that he had entered the County of Flanders as its sovereign lord. To this Philip replied that he relied upon the honour and loyalty of the Flemish Communes, and that, if they had lately gone astray, it was through the evil counsels of individuals who cared more for their own than for the general

good. This answer was received on the 31st July, by which date Edward had been joined by his German allies, so that the army under his supreme command amounted to 120,000 men. The town was immediately surrounded on all sides, the Flemings, under Arteveld, estimated at 40,000, occupying a range of low hills, extending from the Lille road to the hamlet of Sept-Fontaines. They appear to have made use of a kind of mitrailleuse, called *ribaude*, "jetant feu et grands carreaux pour tout rompre," and Froissart makes mention of cannons and bombards on the ramparts of Quesnoy, "which flung large iron bolts in such a manner as made the French afraid for their horses," so that the idea is erroneous which dates the employment of cannon from the battle of Crécy, though they may then have been used for the first time in the field. The garrison of Tournai made an obstinate defence, and repulsed every assault, but the surrounding country and the neighbouring towns and hamlets were cruelly plundered and laid waste. Famine at length broke the proud spirit of the besieged, and a capitulation was imminent. As a last resource, the besieged contrived to apprise the King of their desperate situation, and demanded immediate relief. Philip thereupon advanced to the bridge of Bouvines, and took up a strong position. Instead, however, of raising the siege, Edward placed his army between the town and the French troops, in such a manner that the blockade was continued as rigorously as before, while his own position was practically inaccessible.

In any case, Philip was reluctant to give battle. King Robert of Sicily was again busy with his evil forebod-

ings, nor did Philip himself feel assured of the loyalty of his own Communes. The English light horse meanwhile intercepted his supplies and cut off his foragers, and the only alternative that appeared to present itself was to attack the English army at a serious disadvantage, or to abandon Tournai to its fate. In this critical state of affairs, Joan of Valois, mother of the Count of Hainault and sister to the King of France, who had taken up her abode in the Abbey of Fontenelle, was minded to bring about a cessation of hostilities in order to stay the useless effusion of human blood. Joining her entreaties to those of the two Cardinals despatched by the Pope, with a view to mediate between Christian princes who might be serving the Church in so many better ways, the royal recluse easily prevailed upon Philip to agree to a truce. Encouraged by her success in this quarter, she next worked upon the feelings of the Count of Hainault, the Duke of Brabant, and the Marquis of Juliers, her son-in-law, who only asked for an excuse to retire to their respective States. Even Edward evinced an unwonted placability. He had beleaguered Tournai for seventy-four days, and was in sore straits for money to pay his German auxiliaries and also his own troops. His presence in England was, moreover, absolutely necessary to counteract the intrigues of his enemies. On their part, the Communal militia were anxious to return to their looms and their daily labour, but only on conditions favourable to themselves. Conferences accordingly took place in the village church of Esplechin, and resulted, on the 25th September, in a truce, which was not to expire until the 24th June, 1341. Excellent terms



were obtained by the Communes, through the tenacity of their deputies and the firmness of James van Arteveld. Philip de Valois finally agreed to resign his prerogative of excommunication, remitted numerous fines that were due to him, and recognised the banishment from Flanders of the Leliaerds who had accompanied their Count to the camp at Bouvines. The hostile armies thereupon melted away, each contingent rapidly taking the road to its own country or district. As Froissart remarks, "the good city of Tournai remained unhurt, but it had a narrow escape; for there were at that time no more provisions in it than would have been sufficient for three or four days."

Arteveld led back his men to Ghent, and rendered to the citizens assembled in the market-place an account of his proceedings before Tournai, and a few days later, on the 7th October, the magistrates destroyed at the Hôtel de Ville the bulls and sentences of excommunication which Philip had given up to them. On the same day Louis de Crécy published a proclamation ratifying and confirming all that had been done by the Rewaert of Flanders, "Mynheere Sijmoene van Hals." He also promised to govern his land of Flanders conformably to the prudent counsels of his good towns, and renounced every ground of complaint he might previously have entertained. Edward likewise repaired to Ghent, grievously disappointed with the paltry issue of the campaign.

It is a remarkable circumstance that at a time when sieges were little better than clumsy blockades, the great war captains should invariably have frittered away their time and resources in beleaguering places of very



secondary importance, instead of detaching a sufficient force to mask the town, and pushing forward to give battle, upon which alone depended the fortune of the campaign, perhaps of the kingdom. Edward III. had wasted a whole summer, a vast sum of money, and a formidable armament, in starving a few thousand gallant men-at-arms, while the crown of France was as far off as ever. He was now compelled to lay the state of his affairs before Van Arteveld and the leading men of the principal towns of Flanders, through whose good offices he obtained a loan of 50,000 marks of English money, equal to 200,000 florins. The Counts of Guelders and Hainault, indeed, endeavoured to dissuade Edward from placing too much confidence in James van Arteveld. The King of France, they said, was quite capable of working upon him by gifts and promises, and would not only detach him from the English alliance, but might even make of him an instrument for vile and treacherous purposes. Whether or not Philip ever made the attempt to win Arteveld to his side, it is certain that he never succeeded in casting a stain upon the bright name of the Flemish leader. In any case, the King of England secretly proceeded to Sluys, where he took ship for London. Landing unexpectedly in the middle of the night of the 30th November, he signally disconcerted his enemies, and lodged his ministers in the Tower. The Flemings, however, proved troublesome creditors, and at a later period arrested and put in prison the Earl of Derby, who had gone bail for his Sovereign.

The truce of Esplechin was prolonged from the 24th June, 1341, to the following 29th August, and on the

first day of that month a conference took place at Antoin, which was attended by the Cardinals of Naples and Clermont in the name of Pope Clement VI., and by some of the most distinguished prelates and nobles of England and France. The Flemish Communes were also ably represented, but the pretensions of the English monarch appeared so exorbitant to the French deputies that, after a brief adjournment, it was agreed that the truce should simply remain in force till midsummer-day, 1342. In the mean time Philip de Valois intrigued so successfully with the Emperor of the West that Edward's mandate as Vicar General of the Empire was cancelled, with the effect of making him more than ever solicitous to keep on good terms with the Communes of Flanders. He accordingly granted a Charter to the citizens of Bruges, organising a wool staple, and laying down certain rules for the guidance of both sellers and purchasers, which are described as being more conformable to commercial usage than to statute law—"secundum legem mercatoriam et non secundum communem legem regni nostri." The English marts for the sale of wool were fixed at Newcastle, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Westminster, Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Exeter, Bristol, Carmarthen, Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Drogheda. The discontent expressed by the Corporation of London is not surprising, when it is borne in mind that wool for Flanders was exclusively conveyed in Flemish bottoms.

## CHAPTER XII.

Mission of Catherine van Arteveld—Edward III. in Brittany—Truce of Malestroit—Futile intrigues of Louis de Crécy—The Banner incident at Ardenburg—Prosperity of Flanders under Van Arteveld—Affray with John de Steenbeke—Revival of old institutions—Fullers and weavers—The monopoly of woollen fabrics—"Den Quaden Maendag"—Edward III. at Sluys—Unfounded rumour—Riot at Ghent—Murder of James van Arteveld—His burial—His true character.

IN view of an early renewal of hostilities the deputies of the allies assembled at Mechlin early in May, when the Flemings again insisted that the object of the campaign should be the recovery of Artois. The conference, however, was interrupted by a destructive conflagration, which consumed the Cathedral, the Hotel de Ville—a buiding of great beauty and magnificence—and 5000 houses. Although the truce expired towards the end of June, 1342, it was not until the 2nd August that the Flemish militia were in a condition to take the field. Their progress was soon stopped. On advancing towards Gravelines they suddenly found themselves in presence of a French army commanded by the Counts of Eu and Valois. It was, therefore, considered prudent to halt and await the arrival of their English allies. As these delayed to appear, it was resolved to send an embassy to London to quicken Edward's move-

ments. The post of honour was assigned to Catherine of Courtrai, wife of James van Arteveld, to whom conspicuous honours were paid. Early every morning minstrels stationed themselves beneath the ambassadress's windows, and played various airs "in honour of the land of Flanders." These courtesies, however acceptable in themselves, failed to promote the object of Catherine's mission. Edward III. had already crossed the Channel, but, instead of disembarking at Sluys, he had landed in Brittany to avenge the death of Robert of Artois, mortally wounded at Vannes.

The war of succession was then raging in Brittany. At the decease of the late Duke, his estates were claimed by his brother, John de Montfort, and his nephew, Charles de Blois, the former relying on the aid of England, the latter on that of France. Joan, Countess of Montfort, sister of Louis de Crécy, is familiar to every reader of Froissart, who endows her with "the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." Her defence of the castle of Hennebon was worthy of the most famous heroines of history. Her fiery valour, combined with her misfortunes, pleaded more effectually with Edward than any reasons of State could have done. Throwing over his engagement to invade the county of Artois, he set sail for Brittany, captured Dinant, and laid siege to Vannes and Rennes. Disappointed by the king's absence from his own dominions, Catherine of Courtrai took ship for France and was wrecked off the coast of Brest. Conducted to the presence of the Countess of Montfort, she was sent onward, with a small escort, to the English camp, and is supposed to have taken

part in the negotiations between the King of England and the Duke of Normandy, which led to the truce of Malestroit, concluded on the 19th January, 1343. Through the intervention of the Cardinals a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon for three years, "and the King of England and the duke swore, as is customary, not to infringe it during that time." For the rest, the terms were similar to those that had formed the groundwork of the truce of Esplechin in 1340.

While the Flemish militia were preparing for the invasion of Artois, the Count without having sent any previous intimation of his intention, suddenly arrived at Halewyn, near Menin. As soon as his return to his own territories was noised abroad, deputies from the Communes waited upon him, and escorted him to his château at Maele in the neighbourhood of Bruges. Taking advantage of the general disappointment caused by Edward's failure to fulfil his promises, Louis de Crécy used every means in his power to win his subjects from the English alliance. The knowledge of his intrigues reached the English King when he was on the point of embarking for Vannes, and in consequence of these tidings a trustworthy envoy was despatched to Flanders to counteract the mischievous activity of the Count. On the 9th November the representatives of the good towns met in a sort of Parliament, presided over by the Count, at Damme, when it was resolved to maintain every engagement entered into with the King of England, and a letter in that sense was subsequently addressed to Edward from Ghent.

Shortly afterwards an incident occurred which has

been variously related. The true version was probably to the following effect. The small towns had been exasperated by certain exclusive privileges bestowed by the Count upon the three good towns, which were extremely prejudicial to the general interests of the people at large. Some serious disturbances appear to have arisen, especially at Ardenburg, whither James van Arteveld promptly hastened at the head of the Ghent militia, and where he is said to have slain one Peter Lammens while standing at the door of his own house. Some confusion followed upon this act of violence, but order was restored on Van Arteveld telling his fellow citizens that they would find within proofs of the dead man's guilt. Presently a banner was found and produced amid loud acclamations, and in all likelihood it was similar to those borne by the weavers' craft in Ghent. According to some writers Lammens was a Leliaerd knight, to whom—and to many others—the Count had given a banner to serve as a rallying point whenever the season arrived for attacking the Klauwaerds, while M. de Lettenhove refuses to believe in the death of Peter Lammens, because that name appears in a charter of the Abbey of the Dunes, dated October, 1333, and again in a charter of the Abbey of St. Bavon, dated in June, 1348—two years after the murder of Van Arteveld. But there is no proof that these names belong to the same individual. A son, nephew, or any other relative, or even a total stranger might have borne a name which is not at all uncommon. In any case the Count perceived that nothing could be done with the Communes in their present mood,



and returned to France in the beginning of January, 1343.

Flanders now entered upon a career of great prosperity, unhappily not destined to be of long duration. At the instigation of Van Arteveld, the bed of the Lieve was widened and deepened in order to facilitate communication between Ghent and the sea, compensation being given to owners of land along the banks. Political economy was not much studied in the fourteenth century. Owing to the backwardness of agriculture the Flemish towns were largely dependent on foreign countries for their supply of corn, and with a view to secure permanent abundance every vessel freighted with salt, wine, or other foreign produce, was obliged to devote a certain tonnage to the transport of wheat. Care, however, was taken to maintain the purity of the currency, and generally to promote the success of individuals and the public interest of the country as then understood. While Van Arteveld was engaged in these useful duties, he was suddenly threatened with a great danger. He was accused by a rich and influential citizen, named John de Steenbeke, of aiming at a military dictatorship over Flanders, and when he assayed to justify his conduct his opponent summoned his friends to arms, and for a moment bloodshed seemed inevitable. The banners of at least sixteen craft-guilds, however, speedily rallied round the Captain of the City, and as the news spread to Bruges, Ypres, and Courtrai, the citizens of those towns hastened to Ghent to defend the liberties of the country imperilled by Leliaerd machinations. The local magistrates seem to have acted with admirable vigour and



impartiality. They at once arrested both disputants, and confined Van Arteveld in the Gerard Dievels steen—or keep of Gerard the Devil—while his accuser was placed in the Grævensteen, or Count's prison. A formal investigation was then instituted into the merits of the case, and in the end John de Steenbeke, with a considerable number of his partisans, was sentenced to banishment for fifty years.

Most of the innovations ascribed to Van Arteveld were simply revivals of the old institutions formerly enjoyed by the Communes, but which had been suspended, or suppressed, by successive Counts aiming at despotic power. The town of Ghent was thus marked out into 250 districts, each under its own *deken* or superintendent, and when the tocsin rang out, the citizens quickly assembled at the rendezvous of their respective sections. He is also credited with the division of the citizens into three classes, or “members,” namely, *poorters*, weavers, and the minor crafts. The *poorters* had the privilege of electing the first *ecchevin* of the *Keure*—that is, the chief magistrate of the Communal corporation—who was attended by the *witte caproenen* or white hoods. The weavers were the most numerous and powerful of all the craft-guilds, and are believed to have been about 40,000 strong at the period under notice. The third class comprised the 52 minor crafts, or *neringhen*. The weavers formed the most radical and independent portion of the town population, and were in almost permanent antagonism with the fullers, upon whom they looked down as their servants, and who naturally resented the overweening arrogance of their employers. The *neringhen* usually sided with

the *poortery*, and were rather *Leliaerds* than *Klauwaerds*. Perhaps, as a counterpoise to the weavers, Van Arteveld laboured to improve the position of the minor crafts, and caused his name to be entered on the register of the Brewers—which may very likely have originated the rumour that he was a brewer of metheglin. Following his example, many other persons of gentle birth and of noble extraction sought to be admitted into one or other of these crafts, in the hope of one day attaining the distinction spontaneously conferred upon that great citizen. For, no sooner was he admitted into the brewers' guild than he was chosen their *deken* or *doyen*, and then by common consent the 52 minor crafts elected him *souverainen deken*. In this capacity he appears to have been entitled to a body-guard of *sweerd-draegers*, or sword-bearers, clothed in red with striped sleeves. It is clearly shown by Professor Vanderkindere that from an old date the citizens had been similarly divided, except that at times the fullers took the place of the weavers, especially after some great commotion when the latter had been more than half destroyed or banished.

Another of the reforms attributed to James van Arteveld was undoubtedly a revival. He is said to have divided Flanders into three military circles, or "members," each of which had as its capital, or head-quarters, one of the three good towns of Bruges, Ypres, and Ghent. In former times there had been four "members," including the Franc, but as this territory comprised several of the small towns which were continually encroaching upon the privileges of

the "good towns," it is not surprising that, when these reached the zenith of their influence, they should have excluded the Franc from their military association. For it must be remembered that—the old chroniclers notwithstanding—James Van Arteveld was by no means a dictator or an autocrat. Whatever power he exercised, it was through the free choice of his fellow citizens. His contention with John de Steenbeke he submitted to the judgment of the local magistrates, who decided in his favour because none could know better than themselves that he had acted throughout in obedience to the laws, and in conformity with the usages, of the town of Ghent. In 1342 he had tendered the resignation of his post as Hooftman, and he was re-elected with three of his former colleagues. He was neither a usurper nor a revolutionist. The real charge to be made against his policy is based on its civic selfishness and commercial narrowness of vision. He thought less of Flanders than of Ghent, and less of Ghent than of the prosperity of the woollen manufactures. He would not have hesitated to slay with his own hand a respectable, industrious, fellow countryman if he presumed to work a loom without belonging to the weavers' guild in one of the good towns. Nor would he have scrupled to raze to the ground any town or hamlet that encroached upon the charters granted to Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres. The monopoly of the fabric of woollen cloths for sale claimed by the good towns had been confirmed by Guy de Dampierre in 1296, and, though frequently contested by artisans dwelling in smaller towns, had been virtually enforced in the name of the Count, and

quite recently by Louis de Crécy himself. Louis is accused, however, of having stirred up the rural population to refuse the further recognition of these privileges, and it is certain that in the year 1344 the inhabitants of Poperinghe under the leadership of one James Beyts, asserted their right to dispose of the excess of their woollen fabrics after supplying their own necessities. Thereupon the citizens of Ypres took up arms and marched against their rivals. A fierce and bloody affray took place, in which Beyts and the majority of his followers were slain. The victors then destroyed all the looms they could find, not only in Poperinghe, but also in Bailleul, Langhemark, and Reninghelst.

(i)

A more terrible commotion occurred in Ghent itself on Monday, May 2nd, 1345—a day subsequently marked in the local chronicles as *den quaden maendag*, or Bad Monday. The fullers, it seems, had demanded higher wages, which the weavers refused to give, but the quarrel must have been something more than a mere strike on the part of the former. Social and semi-political causes probably combined with the pressure of poverty to rouse their latent antagonism to a feeling bordering on desperation. They had been thrust into an inferior position by the overwhelming numbers and influence of the weaver-guild, with which James Van Arteveld openly sympathised, and to which, indeed, he and his family originally belonged. In any case fullers and weavers encountered each other in the Friday market place, and fought with such fury that the priests in vain intervened, carrying aloft the consecrated wafer symbolising the presence

of the Founder of their Religion. Not until 500 of their number lay stretched on the ground did the fullers yield to the superior force of their enemies. Oudegherst, indeed, swells the number of the slain to 1500, and remarks that the fullers were so completely crushed that even at the time he wrote—A.D. 1571—they were still insignificant as a guild. The weavers were commanded by their deken Gerard Denys, by whose side Van Arteveld fought with conspicuous bravery.

(8) The Count Louis de Crécy is believed to have had a hand in fomenting discontent, and in stimulating the mutual jealousies of Communes as well as of crafts. He was completely subservient to Philip de Valois, besides being strongly influenced by the selfseeking Duke of Brabant, who placed his men and treasures at the Count's disposal. Foiled in an attempt to surprise Oudenaerd, Louis formed a design to possess himself of Alost and Dendermonde, and with the Duke's assistance he succeeded in establishing himself in the latter fortress. The inhabitants of Ghent are described as having grown weary of the English alliance, or it might be more correct to say that the Leliaerd faction had gained a temporary ascendancy—the natural consequence of the deplorable disturbances which had disgraced the rule of the democracy.

The truce of Malestroit had been violated by Philip de Valois when he put to death Oliver de Clisson and other noblemen whose loyalty he suspected, but it was not until the 3rd July, 1345, that the King of England was prepared to renew the struggle. His first intention seems to have been to have landed in

Brittany or Normandy, but the bad tidings which reached him from Flanders induced him to change the destination of his fleet. Accordingly, on the 5th July, Edward anchored once more in the harbour of Sluys, and on the following day received in audience twenty-one of the most illustrious citizens of Bruges, who had been deputed to congratulate him on his return to Flanders. On the 7th a numerous deputation arrived from Ghent, headed by Van Arteveld, who brought with him a hundred men-at-arms in the hope of persuading the King to proceed to that city. For one reason or another, Edward declined to take that journey, and Van Arteveld returned for definite instructions as to any further negotiations. Four days afterwards he was again at Sluys, accompanied by Thomas de Vaernewyck and John Uutenhove, but without the men-at-arms. Plenipotentiaries from Bruges and Ypres had also arrived at Sluys, and a conference was held on board the *Katherine*, described as a ship of wondrous size and magnificence.

Of what passed on that occasion there are two versions. Some will have it that Van Arteveld proposed, as a corollary to the recognition of Edward III. as King of France, that the Prince of Wales should be recognised as Count of Flanders, if Louis de Crécy persisted in refusing to accept Edward as his liege lord. That is the story related by Froissart, by Villani, and by many other copyists of the Canon of Chimay. On the other hand, no allusion whatever to such a scheme is to be found either in the letters of the English monarch, or in the archives of the Flemish towns. It would, indeed, have been an in-



opportune moment for such a proposition if it be true that Van Arteveld's wife, Catherine of Courtrai, had returned to Flanders on board the English fleet, without having brought back so much as an instalment of the various loans made to Edward by the Flemish Communes, and especially by that of Ghent. If we may believe the chronicles of the country "the King of England was unwilling to permit that the Count should be welcomed back by his own people, until he had done homage to himself as to his overlord." \* It is added that the plenipotentiaries were recommended to elect in the meanwhile a Rewaert, to conduct the government of the county. On the 16th July the plenipotentiaries held a council in Bruges, and chose as Rewaert Sohier de Courtrai, brother-in-law to Van Arteveld, and son of the venerable patriot done to death at Rupelmonde. Under his command it was agreed that the Communal militia should at once proceed to expel the Leliaerds from Dendermonde or Termonde, for which purpose Edward detached a body of Welsh archers under Hugh de Maltravers. Another, and more formidable, Flemish force was to make a point at Cassel, to co-operate with the English troops warring in Normandy.

A letter preserved in the Record Office shows the fallacy of the rumour which ascribed to Edward III. and James Van Arteveld the intention of transferring the county of Flanders from Louis de Crécy to the Black Prince. The letter-writer is the King himself, who bids the Communes of Flanders to receive Louis

\* Corp. Chron. Fland. i. p. 216.



as their Count, so soon as he shall have taken the oath of allegiance to himself. In the event of Louis de Crécy refusing to recognise Edward as his over-lord, the door of reconciliation was still to remain open to his heirs, and there is absolutely no proof that Edward desired any nearer connection with Flanders than through the betrothal of his daughter to Louis de Maele, son and heir to Louis de Crécy. In any case, his final interview with the Communal representatives took place on the 22nd July, and two days afterwards he set sail for France, but was driven by a terrible tempest out of his course, and was glad to run for his own coasts, which he reached on the 26th.

According to Froissart, Van Arteveld, before returning to Ghent, visited both Bruges and Ypres, so that it was on Sunday, the 24th July, that he rode into his native town. He had not gone far, however, before he perceived that something was amiss. Instead of the hearty welcome which usually awaited him, he noticed that the inhabitants turned their backs upon him and went into their own houses. Others formed into little groups, evidently hostile to him, "putting their heads under one hood," and murmuring aloud, "Look you; there goes yonder the great master who thinks to dispose of the land of Flanders as it pleaseth him, which cannot be suffered." Observing these signs of popular disfavour, Van Arteveld hastened towards his own mansion, situated on the Calanderberg, and gave orders to close and fasten the doors and windows, and prepare for the coming attack. These instructions were hardly executed, when a disorderly mob filled the

streets both in front and behind the house. With loud outcries the assailants endeavoured to force an entrance, but were held at bay by Van Arteveld's friends and dependants. Finding it impossible to hold out much longer, he attempted to parley with the infuriated rioters, who refused to listen to him, but went on shouting for an account of the revenues he had appropriated. For in his absence the report had been spread abroad that for seven years he had rendered no account of the public moneys, but had sent large sums to England. A considerable amount, no doubt, had been lent to Edward III., but with the knowledge and consent of the local magistrates, and it is certain that, instead of having enriched himself, the great citizen had really impoverished himself in the service of his ungrateful townsmen.

9 // The calumny may have originated with the double-dealing Duke of Brabant, who was anxious to secure the heir to the county for his own daughter, in which he subsequently succeeded, but it may be assumed that Van Arteveld's masterful ways had made him many private enemies, who were joined by the dregs of the populace, always eager to pull down those who are set up above them, and inflamed by the hope of plunder. It was in vain, therefore, that Van Arteveld pleaded for delay, that he asserted his innocence, that he reminded them of what he had done for their good. They would not hear him, and only raged the more furiously against him. Stealing down to the back of his premises, he sought to gain a neighbouring church, but the mob had possession of the street, and were even then breaking into his house. Making for

the stables, perhaps with the desperate resolution of cutting his way through his assailants on horseback, he discovered that even that faint chance of escape was lost to him. The rioters had broken into his house on both sides, and one of them struck him down with a hatchet or poleaxe.

By whose hand he fell is not distinctly known. Froissart and Despars assign the guilt of his murder to one Thomas Denys, indifferently described as a saddler or a cobbler, while others—probably deceived by the similarity of the name—ascribe the foul act to Gérard Denys, the *deken* of the cloth-weavers, who owed much to Van Arteveld's friendship. That Gérard Denys was envious of Van Arteveld's ascendancy, and lent himself to unworthy manœuvres to effect his downfall, may be true, but he must be acquitted of blood-guiltiness. Chosen to succeed to a portion of the power exercised by the murdered Captain of the Town, he continued on cordial terms with Thomas de Vaernewyck, the friend and colleague of Van Arteveld. He also caused a strict inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the tumult, though it does not appear that the actual criminals were punished beyond being sentenced to pay the *zoene*, or price of blood, to the nearest relatives of the deceased. An expiatory lamp was moreover to burn for ever in the chapel of the monastery of Notre Dame at Biloke, at the expense of the families of Westluc, De Mey, Panneberg, and Pauwels, all of whom had private feuds with Van Arteveld. No mention, however, is made of Thomas Denys, the reputed murderer, an omission that throws some doubt on the charge

alleged against him. The lamp is known to have been still alight in 1375, but it does not again appear in chronicle or *memorie-boek*.

The body of the dead man was deposited for that night in the monastery of Biloke, and afterwards conveyed either to the Abbey of Tronchiennes, and buried beside his father-in-law, Sohier de Courtrai, or to the Carthusian monastery at Royghem, to which a legacy was bequeathed, twelve years afterwards by his son John. As Sohier's tomb was desecrated in the sixteenth century by "Les Gueux," it is possible that Van Arteveld's may have shared the same fate, if his remains were really deposited in that graveyard. In truth, the disposal of his mortal remains is a matter of pure speculation, and of very little general interest at this distance of time. Nor is it positively ascertained whether his house was spared, or totally wrecked and demolished. The latter account is the more common because the more likely, and likewise because none of Van Arteveld's papers have been discovered. On the other hand, the Chevalier Diericx states positively that the house was standing in 1371, while M. de Lettenhove asserts that it was still pointed out in the fifteenth century. There is reason to believe that the offices of the Beleeder van de Stad, known as "de Cancellerie," adjoined his dwelling-house, and it is natural to suppose that Van Arteveld, in expectation of a tumult, would seek to draw away the mob from the portion of the building occupied by his wife and family, and that he would count upon finding at least a portion of his bodyguard at his place of business. As Edward III. had already put out to sea, it is im-

possible that the bearers of these evil tidings found him, as commonly reported, at Sluys. As a fact, it was about Michaelmas when deputies of all the chief Communes, with the exception of Ghent, arrived at Westminster to exonerate themselves from complicity in the murder of his friend and "gossip." They gratefully admitted that under James van Arteveld the prosperity of Flanders had reached its highest point. They protested that they would never forget all that he had done for the Flemish people, nor would they ever depart from the alliance with England which he had so happily brought about. Their soft words assuaged the anger of Edward, whose mind was occupied with the preparations for his projected invasion of France. And thus, says Froissart, the death of the great citizen was, little by little, effaced from men's memories.

Louis de Crécy was in Dendermonde when the news arrived of Van Arteveld's death. Brief space, however, was allowed him for exultation. The militia of Ghent, supported by contingents from Bruges and Ypres, carried by assault the two minor fortresses of Hulst and Axel, and speedily reduced the garrison of Dendermonde to capitulate. The Count made his escape to France, while the Duke of Brabant used his influence to obtain indulgent terms for the Leliaerd knights. Through his intervention the fortifications were left untouched, with the exception of three breaches, forty feet wide, in the side towards Ghent.

Nothing, then, was changed save that Flanders had lost her most notable citizen. This story has been written in vain if the reader has failed to catch a

glimpse of the grand outline of the so-called Brewer of Ghent. The early chroniclers are all agreed as to his remarkable ability, his uncommon eloquence, and his masterful force of character. Unhappily, they are also agreed in describing him as a self-seeking demagogue, as the enemy of established authority, as a contemner of the Church, and as the champion of the baser sort. To M. de Lettenhove, above all others, is due the merit of having discovered his true features, beneath the mask imposed by malice, envy, and ignorance. If somewhat over careful of the interests of his own town, and of his own particular guild, James van Arteveld evinced a high order of statesmanship in his sustained effort to found a nation, through the close alliance of Brabant and Hainault with Flanders. It could have been no ordinary man who raised himself from the humble ranks of the Ghent *poorters* to be courted and feared by kings and princes. He was no vulgar tribune of the people, but the First Citizen of Ghent.

## PART IV.



### A TROUBLED INTERLUDE.





## PART IV.

### A TROUBLED INTERLUDE.



### CHAPTER XIII.

Discomfiture of the Bruges Militia—Death of Louis de Crécy—Succeeded by Louis de Maele—His betrothal to Isabella of England—His flight into France—Indecisive engagements between French and Flemish troops—Surrender of Calais to Edward III.—Invasion of Flanders by Philip—The Communes disunited—Disturbances at Bruges—Duplicity of Louis de Maele—Massacre in Ghent—The Black Death—The Flagellants.

DISAPPOINTED in the expectations he had entertained in connection with the removal of James van Arteveld from his path, Louis de Crécy applied himself to fresh intrigues, and succeeded in creating a disturbance which cost the life of Simon de Mirabel, elected Rewaert in 1340. This melancholy event happened on the 9th of May, 1346, within a year after the assassination of that great man, but its only apparent result was a meeting of Communal representatives at Ghent on the 24th of June, when it was agreed that Flanders should remain faithful to her engagements towards Edward III. That monarch was incessantly occupied with his preparations for the invasion of France, and despatched a small squadron, with 600 archers, to Flanders, to

encourage the Communes to make a diversion in his favour, while he laid waste the duchy of Normandy and marched upon Paris. The communal militia accordingly took the field under the command of Henry of Flanders, and sat down before Béthune. As usual, they displayed more courage than discipline, and were completely baffled in a desperate attempt to carry the place by assault. They were equally unsuccessful in an expedition against Lillers, in which they lost 500 men and 100 waggons. Shortly afterwards a dispute arose between the Bruges militia and that of the Franc, which enabled the French commander, Godfrey d'Annequin, to surprise their camp and burn their tents. Disheartened by these misadventures, they destroyed their battering engines and fell back upon Merville, where the Lys is crossed by a bridge.

1346 In the meantime, Edward III. had won the battle of Crécy, on the 26th August, and was pursuing his march upon Calais. It is admitted even by his enemies that Louis, Count of Flanders, acquitted himself gallantly in that terrible shock of arms. The Counts of Alençon and Flanders greatly distinguished themselves by turning the flank of the English archers, and falling on the division commanded in person by the Prince of Wales. Their banners were seen by Philip de Valois, who made a vigorous effort to join them, but was unable to force a way through the broken and disorganised ranks of his own men. His charger, pierced by arrows, fell to the ground, but the King was placed on another horse by John of Hainault, who had been induced by false devices to renounce the English alliance, and by him, with gentle

violence, was led away out of the *mêlée*. The two Counts were afterwards found among the slain, and the suspicion has been expressed that Louis de Crécy fell by the hand of one of his own retainers. At the same time perished his kinsman, the blind King of Bohemia, who traced his descent from Margaret of Constantinople, through Baldwin d'Avesnes, while the ancestor of Louis was Guy de Dampierre. At Amiens, on his flight to Paris, Philip de Valois received the homage of Louis de Maele. The young Count was only sixteen years of age, but had borne himself with conspicuous valour at Crécy, where he won his spurs. He was also possessed of great manly beauty, but his political views were inherited from his father, and in thought and habit he was thoroughly French.

While the communal levies were still in Artois, news arrived that Edward had been completely defeated and was hastily retreating towards the frontiers of Flanders. The captains of the militia never hesitated for a moment as to the conduct to be pursued at that critical moment. Instead of submitting themselves to the supposed conqueror, they pressed forward to the relief of the conquered, while the magistrates of Ghent summoned all citizens capable of bearing arms to hasten to the support of their ally in his hour of need. Their loyalty was warmly appreciated by the English monarch, who left his camp before Calais in order to thank them in person for their interest in his safety. In the first instance he proceeded to Ypres, where Queen Philippa met her sister Margaret, consort of the Emperor

Lewis of Bavaria, and who had lately inherited the County of Hainault. Thence he hastened to Ghent, and a few days later to Ath, where he was met by the deputies of Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault, who pledged their respective States to maintain the engagements formed by James van Arteveld. Notwithstanding all their past experiences of the duplicity and selfishness of their Counts, the Communes testified their readiness to welcome Louis de Maele, provided he solemnly promised to respect their charters and ancient privileges. The young Count was ready to make any promise that might be required of him, and visited in succession the towns of Courtrai, Ypres, Bruges, and Ghent. It was observed, however, that he listened to the advice only of his father's most pernicious counsellors, especially Roland de Poucke and Louis van de Walle, and that he seemed particularly anxious to separate the Communes from the cause of Edward III. In this matter his motives were personal as well as political. His own desire, subsequently gratified, was to marry Margaret of Brabant, agreeably to the arrangement made between her father and his own in the autumn of 1345, whereas it was the wish of the Communes that he should take to wife a princess of England, with a view to strengthen the commercial relations which so happily united the two countries. The Count, on the other hand, protested that he would never marry a daughter of the man who had caused the death of his father, and was accordingly watched closely lest he should escape into France. At the invitation of the Communes, Edward III. commissioned the Earls of Northampton and Arundel,

and Lord Cobham, to adjust the preliminaries of a matrimonial alliance, and his own brother-in-law, the Marquis of Juliers, had already been appointed Governor of the youthful Count. Weary of the dulness of confinement and restraint, Louis de Maele pretended to yield to the wishes of his subjects, and consented to marry Isabella of England. The ceremony of betrothal took place in the Abbey of St. Winoc, at Bergues, on the 14th of March, 1347, in presence of the King and Queen of England. Edward III. took the hand of the young Count with much tenderness of manner, and assured him on his honour that he was in no way privy to his father's death, and that he did not even know that he was with the French army. Louis appears to have made an appropriate reply, and, kneeling at the altar, swore to espouse the Princess Isabella there present by his side. To mark his own satisfaction, the King announced his intention to establish an hospital for the poor, and a church, with an endowment for a Carthusian monastery, in the island of Cadzand, to efface the unhappy reminiscences of bygone times.

A few days passed quietly away. The Communes relaxed their vigilance, and the English Ambassadors even requested the Count to take the command of the Flemish army that was about to invade Artois. He expressed his ready acquiescence in every suggestion that was made to him, but on the 27th March, barely a fortnight before the day fixed upon for his marriage, he rode out to fly a hawk in his domain at Maele. What next happened is thus related by Froissart:—  
“The falconer flew his hawk at a heron, and the Count

did the same with his. The two hawks chased their quarry, and the Count galloped off as if following them, crying, *Hoy! Hoy!* When he was at some distance from his guards, and in the open fields, he drove his spurs into his horse, and made such speed that he was soon out of sight; nor did he stop till he got into Artois, where he was safe." On recounting the adventure to King Philip and his courtiers he was told that he had done wisely and well; "but the English, on the contrary, accused him of betraying and deceiving them." The Communes had little difficulty in making their peace with Edward III., who, though much exasperated by the conduct of their recreant Count, was too just to hold them answerable for an offence in which they had no part. The Princess Isabella, however, is reported to have felt very keenly the affront that had been passed upon her, and continued for long after to bear the arms of Flanders, protesting that his flight could not vitiate their mutual vows taken at the altar.

The Flemish Communes, in order to vindicate themselves, lost no time in putting their militia in motion, but the French were on their guard, and the usual cry of Treachery! was raised among those who were discomfited. In the beginning of May, 1347, the King of France fixed his headquarters at Arras. His army was computed at 35,000 horse and 100,000 foot soldiers, with whom he proposed to raise the siege of Calais, and destroy, or take prisoners, the slender array of the English monarch. To secure the neutrality of the Flemings, he offered a complete amnesty for the past; to raise the interdict which he had just launched



against them ; to supply them for six consecutive years with wheat at four sous for a measure which was then selling at twelve sous ; to grant them the monopoly of all the wool grown in France, leaving it to themselves to name the price—and also that of furnishing his subjects with woollen fabrics ; and, finally, to make restitution of the towns and bailiwicks of Lille, Douai, and Béthune, the defence of which, however, he would for the present retain in his own hands. He was not less profuse of money than of promises, but the Communes had been so often deceived by Philip de Valois, that they resolved to remain faithful to their engagements with the King of England.

Enraged by their refusal of his overtures, Philip ravaged their borders, and committed to the flames several small towns and hamlets. The Bruges militia thereupon marched upon Bergues and Bourbourg, while the men of Ghent, under the Rewaert, Sohier de Courtrai, hastened to Cassel, which they strengthened with various outworks. If reliance may be placed on Robert of Avesbury, the Duke of Normandy attacked this position with 40,000 men with immense resolution, one assault lasting for two whole days, but in the end was forced to retire, taking with him 280 waggons filled with the dead and wounded. A second army, 70,000 strong, was despatched to avenge this disgrace, and, crossing the Lys at Merville and Estaire, advanced towards Messines and Bailleul. Driven to desperation by the sight of their blazing homesteads, the villagers armed themselves with sickles and pointed stakes, and the tocsin rang out from every steeple. The valiant burghers of Ypres, under the Sire d'Hautkerke,

turned out in support of the peasants, and harassed the enemy with such perseverance that he was constrained to beat an ignominious retreat, by roads rendered almost impassable by rain, and across a country reduced to the condition of a morass. The repulse of these minor expeditions did not prevent Philip from advancing to Sandgate, whence his camp was distinctly visible to the famished garrison of Calais. A battle seemed inevitable, when, suddenly on the night of the 18th August, the French King set fire to his tents, and, abandoning his baggage, took the road to Amiens, where he disbanded his mighty host without having struck a single blow on behalf of Sir John de Vienne and his gallant comrades. The report had reached him that 60,000 Flemings were close at hand under the command of the Marquis of Juliers, and he feared to be caught between the two armies. Forsaken by their sovereign, the heroic garrison of Calais surrendered at discretion, nor had they any reason to complain of Edward's lack of generosity. The romantic episode so picturesquely described by Froissart was unknown to his contemporaries, and was long since shown by M. Levesque, in his history of "France under the Five Valois," to be no more trustworthy than the story of the early Roman Kings, or of the martyrdom of Joan of Arc.

Through the good offices of the Papal Legates a truce was concluded on the 28th September, 1347, to last until July of the ensuing year. Edward's allies were included in this agreement, special favour being shown to the Flemings. The truce seems to have expired without any attempt being made to bring

about its prolongation. Philip de Valois, however, forbade the resumption of hostilities, and deluded the Communes into an indolent belief in his pacific intentions. A strong body of men-at-arms nevertheless sallied forth from Aire and St. Omer, and laid waste the fertile valley of Cassel, driving off immense flocks and herds of sheep and cattle. Deputies were accordingly despatched to England to demand assistance from Edward III. That monarch accorded them a gracious reception, but his treasury was exhausted, nor was he in a condition to go to war on their behalf. He reminded them that he had paid them liberal subsidies when, in past times, he had asked for their co-operation, but it was their business to provide for the defence of their own frontiers. A few days later he informed them that the truce between France and England had been prolonged, whereupon the Leliaerds exclaimed that Flanders was betrayed by the King of England, and raised the Count's banner at Alost. The magistrates of Ghent hastened to repress the movement, and the Count, being unprepared for immediate action, proposed a conference, at which he engaged to respect their ancient customs and franchises, to condone the past, and for the future to govern the country by the advice of the Communes. When these fair words were repeated to the burghers and craftsmen of Ghent, there arose a great tumult. The inferior guilds were in favour of accepting the Count's overtures, but the clothmakers refused to entertain any proposition that ran counter to their engagements with the King of England. In the end the disputants appealed to arms, and, after much effusion of civic

blood, the weavers were victorious. The Bruges men, actuated by their ancient jealousy of their Ghent rivals and also conciliated by a confirmation of their charters, declared themselves for Louis de Maele, as did likewise the towns of Courtrai, Dendermonde, Grammont, and Oudenaerd. For all that, when it was known that the Count had arrived at the Château de Maele, accompanied by his evil counsellors, Roland de Poucke and Louis van de Walle, the people of Bruges were greatly agitated, nor was the commotion appeased by the arrest of Giles de Coudebrouck, who had for many years held the office of burgomaster, and was considered the chief fomentor of discontent. To effect his deliverance the weavers and fullers forgot their differences and, gathered together in considerable numbers, gave battle to the Count's retainers and partisans, by whom they were routed with great slaughter and compelled to give up their arms.

Ghent and Ypres still held out. His specious promises having been taken at their true value, Louis de Maele prepared to reduce his refractory subjects by famine and the sword. On the 18th November, 1348, he was joined at Dendermonde by the Dukes of Brabant and Limburg, each at the head of a formidable force, which enabled him to cut off all supplies and to destroy the commerce of those two important towns. The sufferings of the poor were terribly severe, though mitigated by the generosity and devotedness of the rich, who brought to the public treasury whatever objects of value they chanced to possess. The family of James van Arteveld came forward with their offerings, headed by his widow

clad in deep mourning, though her funereal garments, if she really wore them, were scarcely in harmony with her position as the wife of John Baronaige. Within three years of the murder of her first husband, the foremost man in Flanders, she had consented, it is said, though the mother of grown-up sons and daughters, to change an historic and honoured name for that of an ordinary *poorter*, though the mourning may have been only a conventional idea on the part of the artist who undertook to illustrate this incident. It is more agreeable to know that some English soldiers of fortune who had remained in Flanders after their sovereign's return to his dominions, bore themselves bravely in repelling every assault delivered by the Count's followers and mercenaries. || (h)

Despairing of success by the employment of force Louis de Maele had once more recourse to art and duplicity. He affected to separate himself from the cause of Philip de Valois and to espouse that of Edward III. He talked of regaining the bailiwicks of Lille, Douai, and Béthune, wrongfully torn from Flanders, and begged the King of England to intercede for him with the Communes. At that moment the Earls of Lancaster and Suffolk happened to be at Boulogne, charged with the mission of making peace with France, and they now received further authority and instructions to act as mediators between the Count and his subjects. Negotiations ensued, and on the 10th December were ratified by Edward. The Count agreed to accord a plenary amnesty to the burghers of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres, to confirm their charters, to fulfil the engagements made between the King of England

and the Communes, and to compel the Leliaerd knights and nobles to accept this adjustment of differences. On the 13th December Louis de Maele solemnly swore, at Dunkirk, in presence of the Bishop of Norwich and the Earls of Lancaster and Suffolk, faithfully to execute these conventions. This oath, however, he violated with as little scruple as the one by which he bound himself, two years previously, to marry Isabella of England. Some hitch having taken place in the particular agreement that the Count was endeavouring to make with the people of Ghent, John Van de Velde, the chief man among the weavers, refused to trust himself to the Count, protesting that he asked for no other tomb than the market place. Louis acted with vigour at this critical moment. Two of his captains fell with great fury upon the weavers, who had been too much weakened by war and civil discord to make a successful defence. A great number were put to the sword, and not a few were drowned in the Lys, while Van de Velde was dragged from his hiding-place in a baker's shop, and slain on the market place which he had himself designated his tomb.

At the same time, January 13th, 1348, perished Gérard Dénys, who had taken such an active part in the fatal attack on James van Arteveld. Although the gates of Ypres had been thrown open to Joseph d'Halewyn, lord of Espierres, the clothmakers there also rushed upon certain death, the survivors migrating to other towns, after seven of their leading men had been publicly beheaded. There is nothing, however, more remarkable in the annals of the Flemish



Communes than their power of rapid recuperation. Again and again we read of the weavers and fullers being well nigh annihilated, and yet a few years later their crafts are prosperous and their trade flourishing. The explanation is probably simple enough. However jealous the great towns might be of their exclusive charters and monopolies so long as all went well with them, they might be expected to relax something of their severity in times of trouble, and to welcome an accession of strength from the rural craftsmen, who desired nothing more eagerly than to be admitted to the privileges of the town guilds.

Never were these recuperative powers more needed than about the middle of the fourteenth century. In the latter part of the year 1348 a most destructive pestilence, known as the Black Death, was brought into Europe from the eastern regions of Asia. It appears to have arrived by way of Egypt, Armenia, and Greece, and to have made its appearance at Pisa, whence it crossed the Alps to Avignon and Montpellier. After that, its course was rapid and uninterrupted. Not a single country escaped its ravages, the germs of the disease being conveyed by ship even to Iceland. The town or district that lost no more than a fourth part of its population was deemed fortunate. It is estimated that in Paris 50,000 persons perished, while in London that number of dead bodies were interred in trenches on the piece of ground given to the City as a graveyard by Sir Walter Manny, the brave knight of Hainault, and which subsequently became the site of the Charter House. In Norwich there were 60,000 fatal cases, and in England generally the



population is believed to have been reduced to two millions, or little more than half of what it was previous to the outbreak of the plague. In Flanders the port of entry was Sluys, whence it spread all over the country. A contemporary writer, Gilles li Muisis, describes with painful minuteness the progress of the pestilence at Tournai. A slight swelling under the armpits was followed in a few days by death, and it was said that it was sufficient to look upon a sick man to catch the disease. The infection, no doubt, like that of cholera in our own times, was conveyed by air and water, while the danger was intensified by the absence of any system of sewage and sanitation. In the little town of Tournai there were 25,000 deaths, nor did the rich escape any more than the poor, though a nutritious and stimulating diet was recommended as the best prophylactic. It was even remarked that the strong and healthy were struck down rather than the weak and sickly, and that, while hale and hearty men were carried off by thousands, aged persons and little children were passed over. The panic was so utterly demoralising that the ties of affection were snapped asunder. Mothers fled from their infants—wives left their husbands untended. It was reserved for the ministers of religion to set an example of self-sacrifice.

While all others stood aloof, the priests splendidly devoted themselves to the care of the sick and suffering, so that we learn without surprise that in Yorkshire their numbers were diminished by one-half, and that in the eastern counties of England barely one-third of the parish priests survived the ordeal. Nor were they found less true to their holy mission in

Tournai and the other towns of Flanders. The magistrates likewise strove to do their duty according to their lights—dimmed by superstition. They implored the citizens of all ranks to lay aside their petty squabbles and disputes, and to humble themselves before the wrath of an offended heaven. No shops were suffered to be opened on Sunday, nor was the name of the Deity taken even to attest legal and official acts. Dice were shorn of their angles and, rounded into beads, were strung together as chaplets. Social life ceased to be genial, though ten guests were still allowed to sit down to table. To lessen the excess of hysterical terror, mourning was forbidden to be worn even for the nearest and dearest. Whole streets were left without inhabitants, and in the country the fields were uncultivated, and the sheep and the cattle wandered to and fro as they pleased, for there was no one to look after them. The gloom of despair brooded over the land. The glad sound of music was heard nowhere. There was no singing or dancing, and young and old alike seemed to have forgotten how to smile.

Out of this horror there sprang up the crazy order of Flagellants. The sect took its rise in Hungary, and, passing through Germany, attained its fullest development in Flanders. If Froissart may be credited, the Flagellants did not enter France, “for the King had strictly forbidden them, by desire of the Pope, who disapproved of such conduct for sound and sensible reasons. All clerks,” he continues, “or persons holding livings, that countenanced them were excommunicated, and several were forced to go to Rome to purge

themselves." The Flagellants themselves professed to believe that an angel had descended from Heaven and alighted on the altar of St. Peter's Church at Jerusalem, in view of the Patriarch and the entire congregation who, prostrating themselves before the spiritual vision, repeatedly ejaculated "*Kyrie eleison!*" After placing on the altar a stone tablet similar to those Moses had received on Mount Sinai, and which bore the new law of expiation traced by the finger of the Deity, the Angel vanished from their sight. To these fanatics the readiest form of expiation appeared to be self-torture, and thus day after day they halted thirty-three times on their march,—in commemoration of the thirty-three years of the life of Jesus, and stripping themselves naked to the waist they scourged their back and shoulders with cords terminating in iron points. At the same time they chanted dismal canticles in remembrance of Christ's nativity and martyrdom, and believed that the blood which streamed from their self-inflicted wounds became mingled in a mystical manner with that of Him who died upon the Cross to expiate the sins of mankind. Each company remained only one night in the same place, nor did any one of them ever indulge in a bed. They addressed each other as brother or sister, for many women, and some of high rank, joined themselves to the Flagellants, and thought it no shame to expose their persons to the gaze of the rabble. At night-time these companies traversed the country by torch-light, the leaders bearing aloft a crucifix, and the entire band chanting litanies and psalms. Whenever they paused for the purpose of flagellation, they circled

round the mendicant friars who accompanied them, and threw themselves on the ground with their arms stretched out in the form of a cross. Three times they rose to scourge themselves, three times they flung themselves down upon the ground. By way of grace before meals they dropped upon their knees five times. They were clad in long robes which reached to their feet, and their cowls were embroidered with a red cross. Some companies even crossed the Channel to perform a pilgrimage to St. Paul's Church in London. Though France is said to have escaped this folly on the occasion under notice, at a later period that country was less fortunate, for at the time of the League the Flagellants were not unfrequently headed by no less a personage than the King himself. So long as the plague continued to rage, the Flagellants are described as leading moral and even austere lives, but when the panic abated fanaticism was replaced by dissolute and disgraceful practices, till the magistrates interfered and prohibited the nuisance.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Death of Philip de Valois—Naval battle off Winchelsea—The Count and the Communes—John de Valois—Charles the Bad—Joseph and Walter d'Halewyn beheaded—Riots in Ghent—Battle of Poitiers—Death of the Countess of Flanders—Loyalty of Louis de Maele—Marriage of Margaret of Flanders to Philip Duke of Burgundy—Death of Edward III.—Profligacy of Louis de Maele—Stirs up strife between Bruges and Ghent—John Yoens and Gilbert Mahieu—Adoption of the white hoods—Murder of the Count's bailiff at Ghent—Wreckage of the Count's château at Wondelghem.

TOWARDS the close of the summer of 1350, Philip de Valois died at Nogent-le-Roi. "His body," says Froissart, "was buried at St. Denis, on the left hand of the great altar; his bowels were interred at the Jacobins in Paris, and his heart at the convent of the Carthusians at Bourg-fontaines in Valois." He was succeeded by his eldest son John, who was shortly afterwards crowned at Rheims. The first public act of the new monarch was to conclude an alliance with Peter the Cruel, King of Castile, and the combined fleets of France and Spain wrought great damage to English commerce, capturing merchant vessels and harassing the coast. Edward III. and the Prince of Wales were cruising before Winchelsea, the King amusing himself with a German dance-song lately introduced by Sir John Chandos, when the look-out

man at the masthead cried out : “ Ho, I spy a ship, and it seems to me to be a Spaniard.” The minstrels were speedily disposed of, for the whole Spanish fleet, after refitting in the Zwyn, speedily hove in sight. Although inferior to the enemy in every respect save courage, the King resolved to give battle. Drinking a draught of wine, Edward and his knights fixed their helmets on their heads, and made themselves ready. The engagement was brief, but hotly contested on both sides. Never were the King and the prince in greater personal danger. In the end, however, they captured fourteen big ships, and the Spaniards fled to the friendly shelter of the coast of Flanders, for Louis de Maele, notwithstanding the truce and in spite of the remonstrances of the Communes, had again joined the enemies of England. His character, indeed, was eminently variable, inconsequent, and perfidious ; but, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that, from the feudal point of view, he had much reason to complain of the independent and unstable disposition manifested by the Communes. They were willing to recognise his prerogatives as their lord, but only on conditions which reduced his authority to the mere shadow of seignorial power. They had renounced their allegiance to their overlord, and sought to compel him also by some means or another to transfer his fealty from the actual King of France to a pretender to that title. Now, Louis de Maele was thoroughly a Frenchman by birth, education, and life-long associations, while he looked upon Edward III. as the cause of his father’s death at Crécy. Besides, the struggle between the democracy and the ancient nobility was



becoming greatly embittered on both sides. The Communes remembered with scarcely suppressed indignation the wrongs and contumely they had suffered through so many generations at the hands of the nobles, while the latter had not yet learned to respect, or to fear, those whom they had been brought up to regard as immeasurably their inferiors, and whose mission it was to tremble and obey.

The naval victory over the Spaniards gained by the English fleet was hailed by the Flemings with every demonstration of public joy. They renewed their assurances of unalterable attachment to the English sovereign, who wrote a letter to the citizens of Ghent, dated the 20th May, 1351, promising to forgive them their recent backslidings in virtue of their former good services, and to restore to them his favour, trusting to their praiseworthy conduct in the future. Taking advantage of the unsettled state of affairs in France, Edward III. commissioned the Duke of Lancaster to organize a European league against King John, beginning with Flanders. The Duke was instructed to propose to Louis de Maele that his only daughter Margaret, then in the fifteenth month of her age, should be affianced to one of the English princes, and that a subsidy should be granted to the King of England to enable him to invade France in concert with the communal militia.

It must be confessed that John was quite unworthy to wear a crown. He began by falsifying the currency, and dissipated the public treasures on frivolous pleasures and pursuits. His necessities compelled him to convoke the States of the Provinces in the hope of obtaining a



grant of money, though with little success, for he was met by murmurs from all sides. The commonalty wanted only a leader, and him they found in a youth barely twenty years of age, but daring, eloquent, and popular, in Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, and grandson, by the mother's side, of Louis le Hutin. This prince proceeded to Ypres to negotiate with the Flemish Communes and with Edward's representative, Stephen of Kensington, who, on the 18th August, 1351, engaged in that monarch's name to bestow upon him the counties of Champagne and Brie, with the city of Amiens,—the King reserving to himself “the Crown and the surplus of the kingdom of France.”

The Duke of Lancaster in the meanwhile had induced Queen Philippa's sister, the Countess of Hainault, to place her resources at the disposal of her royal brother-in-law, and it was even reported that she intended to abdicate in his favour. King John, however, had not been totally neglectful of his own interests. By a secret treaty, dated from Fontainebleau, July 24th, 1351, he promised Louis de Maele lands situated within his own county yielding a yearly income of 10,000 livres. He also undertook to defend his frontiers against Edward III., and to furnish him with 200 men-at-arms to garrison Gravelines, and with the means to pay one thousand more. In the event of the Count deeming it necessary to proceed against the Communes with severity, the King engaged to waive all claim to any share in confiscated property; while, on the other hand, should he judge it more expedient to

adopt conciliatory measures and to pledge himself to the recovery of the three bailiwicks which had constituted the dowry of Margaret of France, consort of Louis de Crécy, John agreed to offer no opposition. Two months afterwards the Count broke off his negotiations with Edward III., and on the 4th October banished for life from Bruges 380 citizens accused of having held communications with the English envoys. A few days later he set out for Paris to do homage to his overlord, John de Valois.

During the absence of the Count the magistrates of the three good towns executed an act of justice with a high hand. In the year 1328, at the time of the destruction of the Flemish patriots at Cassel, Joseph d'Halewyn, lord of Espierres, and his brother Walter, forsook the cause of the Communes and went over to the French. Their treachery was punished by the men of Courtrai, who committed to the flames his castle at Espierre; but in those days one act of violence was promptly followed by another, by way of reprisal. Accordingly, no long time elapsed before Joseph d'Halewyn swooped down upon the territory of Courtrai and carried off much booty; and in the following year his brother Walter wellnigh exterminated the clothmakers of Ypres. Emboldened by impunity these two lords fixed no bounds to their cruelty. They arrested and held to ransom peaceful traders and travellers, and in pure wantonness maltreated the very priests. One day a peasant from Menin presented himself before the magistrates of Courtrai, and deposed, that on the previous night the Sire d'Espierres had broken open the doors and shutters

of his house, and had caused him, only half-dressed, to be seized and wounded, and had only released him after payment of a certain sum of money. The matter was laid before the magistrates of the three good towns, who summoned the two brothers to appear before them and clear themselves of the serious charges that had been alleged against them. Their messenger, however, was beaten and forced to swallow the summons of which he had been the bearer. A few days barely elapsed before the two knights were arrested, brought to trial, and publicly beheaded in the market-place of Courtrai. This act of justice was succeeded by an outrage. As the magistrates of Ghent were on their way home, and had reached the village of Vyve-Saint-Bavon, they were suddenly attacked and murdered by a party of Leliaerds under Gerard de Steenhuyze. An expiatory chapel was subsequently erected on the spot. These tidings hastened the return of Louis de Maele, who entered Ghent at the head of his armed retainers, and preceded by his banner. The weavers had collected in the market-place, and, with loud outcries, demanded the suppression of the burdens which had illegally been imposed upon them. They were answered by blows, and the open square was once more stained with blood.

Again did the Duke of Lancaster, in the name of his royal master, endeavour to open negotiations with Louis de Maele. In that direction his success was small, but in the embrasure of a certain window at Damme he held a long and secret conversation with the chancellor of the King of Navarre, who had jour-

neyed to Bruges to raise money on the crown jewels. As Charles the Bad possessed large estates in Normandy, it was in his power to open to the English a way into France, and to that extent his enmity was dangerous. King John, however, attached more importance to the friendship of the Count of Flanders, whom he sought to attach to the royal family of France by arranging the union of Margaret of Maele with the young Duke of Burgundy, whose mother he himself had lately married. He was also resolved to win the Communes from their alliance with England. With this view he renounced for himself and his successors for ever the power of excommunication, and this renunciation was ratified by a bull of Innocent VI., who formally revoked the licences granted by three of his predecessors. The Communes appear to have met these friendly overtures more than halfway, and to have sensibly cooled in their attachment to Edward III. In his own kingdom, however, fortune was unpropitious to John de Valois. Notwithstanding the general destitution of his subjects he found himself under the necessity of imposing the *gabelle*, or tax upon salt, and likewise a tax upon incomes, taking one hundred livres per annum as the minimum. But money was not alone wanting. The spirit of the nation had deteriorated since the battle of Crécy to a lamentable extent. That defeat was rather a misfortune than a disgrace, for the knights and nobles fell fighting to the last. It was otherwise at Poitiers, where, on the 19th September, 1356, the King himself and his youngest son, as well as many lords and knights of high degree, with 2000 men-at-arms, sur-

rendered their swords to a handful of way-worn and famishing Englishmen.

The death of James van Arteveld has been commonly attributed in the first instance to the Duke of Brabant, who, in his anxiety to obtain for his daughter the honour of being united in marriage to the future Count of Flanders, had stirred up the craftsmen of Ghent to murder their benefactor. His chief instrument is said to have been Gérard Denys, whose base temperament was troubled with the remembrance of the numerous obligations under which he had been laid by the object of his miserable envy. Had he remained contented with the subordinate position which alone he was qualified to fill, the clear head, stout heart, and strong hand of Van Arteveld might have been trusted to counteract alike the intrigues and the violence of Louis de Maele, and the *deken* of the cloth makers might have enjoyed many years of happiness, and at length have died tranquilly in the midst of his family and friends. As it was, he fell beneath the weapons of the Count's adherents only three years after the death of his victim. Neither had the Duke of Brabant much reason to boast of his success in marrying his daughter to Louis de Maele. The lady herself was confined in the dungeon of the Count's château for having caused the death of a rival,\* but it is probable that the actual cause of

\* Tradition, as revived by the late M. Delepierre, relates how, in the Count's absence, Margaret of Brabant caused a peasant girl, named Rose Burchard, who, without being aware of her lover's name and rank, was not far from her confinement, to be carried off by night from her father's cottage, placed in a damp cell, and there

hostilities was the duke's refusal to pay Margaret's dower. The Flemish burghers, who had not yet forgotten the assistance rendered by the Brabant knights in starving out the towns of Ghent and Ypres, eagerly flocked to the Count's banner, and completely routed the army of the duke, who fled into Germany, abandoning his territory and towns to the victor. Peace was finally concluded on the 4th June, 1357, through the intervention of the Count of Hainault. Mechlin and Antwerp were ceded to Flanders in lieu of the promised dowry, and the good towns of Brabant were pledged to aid the Count in his military expeditions with twenty-five men-at-arms for the space of six weeks, while the nobility likewise engaged to send him two knights and two banners.

It is to the credit of Louis de Maele that he never wavered in his allegiance to the King of France. He is even said to have agreed to join a small band of French nobles who had planned the deliverance of John, though nothing came of it. By the peace of Bretigny in 1360, Edward III. pledged himself to meddle no further with the Flemings provided the King of France equally withdrew all aid from the Scotch. The staple of wool had already been taken away from Bruges and established in Westminster, but not unmindful of the steadfast friendship of James

deprived of her nose and lips. A few days later the poor girl died in the delirium of fever. On the Count's return from France, her father complained to him of his daughter's violent abduction, and the horrible story was brought to light. The Countess is reported to have perished in a loathsome dungeon, destitute of window or fire-place, and ventilated only by a small opening, through which her daily portion of bread and water was passed to her.



van Arteveld the English monarch stipulated that, before he set his royal prisoner at liberty, the Count of Flanders should recal from banishment John and James, the two younger sons of his murdered "gossip." When Edward III. arrived in Calais with King John, Louis de Maele suddenly made his appearance on the 12th October, 1360, and bravely knelt before his own sovereign alone, though still a captive.

In the following year, in the month of July, Margaret of Flanders was married at Oudenaerd, in the twelfth year of her age, to Philip of Burgundy, who died four months afterwards at Rouvre. The duchy passed on his decease to the Crown of France, but the hand of the heiress to the County of Flanders was not the less coveted by Edward III. for his son Edmund, Earl of Cambridge. The proposition was at first scornfully rejected by the Count, but after the death of King John he felt less secure of his ability to make head against the Communes, who clamoured for the alliance. An agreement was finally sealed and ratified at Dover, on the 19th October, 1364, by which it was arranged that the marriage should be celebrated at Bruges, on the Tuesday following the next festival of Candlemas. The King of England undertook to settle upon his son the counties of Ponthieu and Guines, the lands of Marc, the castle of Calais, and all the rights possessed by the Queen over the counties of Hainault, Holland, Zealand, and the lordship of Friesland, besides an annual income of 6000 francs derived from landed estates. In addition to all this, the sum of 100,000 francs was to be paid to Louis de Maele. A



pontifical dispensation by reason of closeness of consanguinity was, however, necessary, and on that rock the negotiation was completely wrecked. Charles V. exercised more influence than Edward III. at Avignon, and at last prevailed upon Urban V. to refuse the requisite dispensation. Not the less did Edward strive to renew his old relations with the Communes, and he evinced his sincerity by establishing a wool-staple at Calais, as more convenient to them than at Westminster.

It was, however, from the French King that Flanders was led to expect the greatest advantages. Charles V. had formed the design of obtaining Flanders for his brother Philip, Duke of Burgundy—afterwards known as Philip the Bold—by marrying him to Margaret. To gain the good will of the Communes he engaged to restore the three bailiwicks of Lille, Douai, and Orchies as a substitute for the ten thousand livres a year promised to Louis de Maele and his successors in 1351, as well as the towns of Peronne, Crèvecœur, Arleux, and Château-Chinon, assigned to him in 1358. It is stated that while Charles V. pledged himself to make these restitutions “*en bonne foy et loyalté et parolle de roy, sans fraude,*” he had stipulated with his brother that they should be returned to him on the death of Louis de Maele, and also that the power to issue ecclesiastical censures should again be a prerogative of the French crown. But, to the general surprise, the Count of Flanders refused to confirm this arrangement, though offered 200,000 francs to do with as he pleased. Nor did he relax his opposition until his mother, Margaret,

daughter of Philip the Long, threatened to disown him by cutting off the breast at which he had been suckled, and to bequeath to another the county of Artois. To such arguments, especially the latter, Louis de Maele had nothing to reply, and accordingly set his seal to the articles of marriage. On the 13th May, 1369, the "Lion of Flanders" once more floated, after an interval of half a century, over the walls of Lille, Douai, and Orchies, and at the same time Flemish garrisons marched into St. Omer, Aire, Béthune, and Hesdin. The marriage ceremony took place at Ghent on the 19th June, but the liberality of the bridegroom reduced him in a few days to the necessity of borrowing money from three Bruges merchants, and on the 29th of that month he proceeded with his youthful bride to Lens and thence to Paris.

In consequence of this marriage Edward III. declared that all engagements he had entered into with France had ceased and determined, and he found the Communes quite ready to renew friendly relations with England. A temporary misunderstanding, indeed, arose through a fleet of Flemish merchantmen, laden with the wines of La Rochelle, which had put in at Torbay, being mistaken for French ships, and after a vigorous resistance, being all taken or destroyed. Suitable redress, however, was immediately tendered and accepted, and amity was restored in the spring of 1371. Negotiations were also set on foot to bring about peace between the Kings of France and England, but without much effect, though hostilities were suspended from time to time. The truce of Bruges was prolonged more than once, but expired in

April, 1377, by which time both\* the Black Prince and his illustrious father, Edward III., had departed from the scene of strife and martial glory.

War would have been infinitely preferable to the peace which prevailed in Flanders. The Count gave himself up entirely to dissolute enjoyments. His time was spent in the society of minstrels and other low born favourites, or in playing with his dogs, his hawks, and his monkeys. The evil example was naturally copied by all who wished to stand well in his sight. Nobles, dignitaries of the church, wealthy burghers, and impoverished artisans, each, according to their means, abandoned the serious pursuits of life, and addicted themselves to pleasure and frivolity. Extravagance in dress was practised by both men and women. The dice were invoked to repair the breaches made by reckless expenditure, and augmented the dilapidation of estates and capital. The poor entered into rivalry with the rich, and these set no limits to their profusion. Peasants and artisans alike were ground down to the dust, to furnish their lords and employers with the means of gratifying their sumptuous tastes and uncontrolled passions.

Towards the latter end of May, 1379, the Count proceeded to Ghent to preside over certain jousts to which had been invited many noble and gallant knights from Brabant, Holland, and France, and while the preparations were in progress he announced a new tax he was about to impose. Against this

\* In this, the last year of the reign of Edward III., Geoffrey Chaucer was sent to Flanders with Sir Thomas Percy, afterwards Earl of Worcester, to obtain a prolongation of the truce with France.

fresh exaction a burgher of Ghent, named Goswin Mulaert, lifted up his voice and cried aloud: "The taxes paid by the people must not be squandered upon the follies of princes, and the keep of actors and buffoons," and the other citizens applauded what he had said. The Count thereupon returned to Bruges, and to mark his resentment at the conduct of the inhabitants of Ghent, promised to do everything in his power for their rivals. These listened rather to the dictates of their narrow-minded jealousy than to the generous promptings of patriotism, and conceived the infamous design of diverting the waters of the Lys by a canal to the Reye, so that the wheat market of Artois should be removed from Ghent to Bruges. It was, of course, soon known in the former town that something was being done to the prejudice of their interests, though of its precise nature they were ignorant until a woman, in a soiled garment and all travel-stained, sat down beside the cross in the market-place. Replying to various questioners she said that she was on her way home from a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Boulogne, and that she had seen five hundred Bruges diggers working day and night to change the course of the Lys. Her words naturally created great excitement. A general outcry arose that such proceedings should not be tolerated, and by common consent the people turned for advice and guidance to a burgher of repute, named John Yoens.

In former times there lived at Damme two wealthy families named Piet and Baert, who were opposed to one another in all things, until such a hatred arose

between them as is only possible in a small town, with its narrow circle of backbiters, talebearers, and stirrers-up of strife. Two branches of these ill-conditioned houses became established at Ghent; to the one belonged John Yoens, to the other Gilbert Mahieu. The ancient feud, however, seemed to have been forgotten and put away. The Yoens and the Mahieus met at good men's feasts, conversed together in a friendly manner, and conducted themselves after a fashion becoming to respectable and right-minded citizens. There is no reason to suspect the sincerity of John Yoens, but Gilbert Mahieu is described by Froissart as a man of crafty devices, full of subtlety, and daring in enterprise. Determined to supplant Yoens in the favour of the Count, by whom he was much cherished, and through whose influence he had been appointed *deken* of the mariners' guild, Mahieu remarked, as in a casual manner, to one of the Count's chamberlains, that nothing would be easier than to gather an income of six to seven thousand florins a year, by imposing a small duty upon the petty trade of the Scheldt and the Lys. The chamberlain naturally repeated to the Count what he had heard, and Mahieu was summoned to his presence to explain his meaning. The latter artfully threw upon Yoens the responsibility of accepting or refusing this new impost, and the *deken*, after consulting the members of his craft, honestly endeavoured to dissuade his lord from a measure certain to be unpopular, and which was calculated to injure local industry. Louis de Maele, however, was always pressed for means to gratify his prodigality, and accordingly disgraced his old adherent, John Yoens, and gave

his post to Gilbert Mahieu. The new impost was levied, and a small sum of money was collected, but the river trade was sensibly depressed, and great dissatisfaction prevailed among the inferior crafts. Yoens held his peace and bided his time, nor had he to wait very long.

The attempt made by the Bruges ditchers to divert the channel of the Lys excited the inhabitants of Ghent to the highest degree of indignation and dismay. In their trouble they betook themselves to John Yoens, who, bethinking him of the example of James van Arteveld, exhorted them to resume the white hoods, as a symbol of union and fraternity. The next step was to despatch a considerable body of armed men, distinguished by these emblems, to put a stop to the labours of the delvers. That operation was easily executed, for scarce any resistance was offered, nor was the work ever again taken in hand. But as the Ghent people were returning to their homes, one of them seems to have fallen into the hands of the Count's adherents, and was carried off to Eecloo. His fellow-citizens demanded his release, but Roger de Hauterive, the Count's bailiff, answered them roughly, and threatened to deal in like manner with every one who presumed to wear a hood. His reply was noised abroad, and the burghers perceived that their franchises were in danger of being set at naught. The magistrates were, therefore, pressed to lay the matter before the Count, and to obtain from him a satisfactory recognition of their privileges. A certain number of them immediately proceeded to Maele, and submitted their complaints to the Count, who listened to them



graciously, and promised ample redress, but required of them, in their turn, that they should lay aside their white hoods. Gilbert Mahieu was one of those who waited upon the Count on this occasion, and may very likely have prompted the Count's answer, being conscious that he could work no further harm to his rival so long as he was supported and surrounded by the wearers of the *witte caproenen*. He is said at least to have uttered a somewhat cynical remark that some of those who now wore hoods would soon have no heads to put into them—"tels les portent maintenant qui temprement n'auront que faire des chaperons."

John Yoens saw through the duplicity of the Count and his counsellor, and with great earnestness impressed upon his fellow-citizens the fatal consequences of yielding to such suggestions. The soundness of his advice was soon demonstrated. Roger de Hauterive, acting upon the Count's instructions, entered Ghent at the head of two hundred horsemen, and penetrated to the corn market, where he was joined by Mahieu and his followers. The other party, however, were on their guard. Yoens had received timely intimation of the coming danger, and had warned the White Hoods to hold themselves in readiness for sudden action. The signal, therefore, was no sooner given than they hastened to his house, their appointed rendezvous, and as soon as some four hundred had come together, Yoens placed himself at their head, and led them straight on to the Corn Market. The Mahieu faction fled from the place, and abandoned the bailiff to his fate. A few daring men at once rushed at him, pulled



him off his horse, and murdered him. His adherents, terrified by the boldness of the assault, broke and fled in all directions, consulting only their own safety. The Count's banner was dragged through the dirt, and torn to rags; and on that day, September 5th, 1376, John Yoens was the master of Ghent. He is, of course, painted by Froissart in the blackest colours, as a revengeful and disappointed man, a mob orator and tribune of the populace—a bad copy, in short, of James van Arteveld. That, however, is not the character ascribed to him by impartial writers and historical critics of modern times, who agree in representing him as a prudent, sagacious citizen, loyal to the Count so long as the municipal rights of the Communes were properly respected. The death of Roger de Hauteville must not be laid at his door. The incident was occasioned by a blind access of fear and fury. His followers got out of hand, and the bailiff was a dead man before their leader could have interposed to save him.

It was at the suggestion of Yoens that the magistrates deputed twelve of the most influential burghers to proceed to Maele, to intreat the Count to forgive the murder of his bailiff. This mission was on the point of complete success when Louis received tidings which drove him well-nigh mad with rage. If we adopt Froissart's narrative—and he may have been correctly informed on this point—Yoens had distrusted the Count's leniency, and feared that he might delude the deputation with unmeaning promises, and in the meanwhile secretly despatch a force to surprise Ghent. He therefore prevailed upon a body of nine to ten

thousand men to accompany him to a point that commanded the road from Bruges. Unfortunately, Louis' favourite country seat, the Château de Wondelghem, was within an easy distance from that spot, and it came to be reported that large stores of provisions and warlike munitions were hidden away in the cellars, which might at some future time be used to their prejudice. The house was accordingly ransacked, and suddenly flames burst out, and utterly consumed it. It was estimated to have cost 200,000 francs, a very large sum in those days, and it was greatly affected by the Count. When, therefore, he heard of its destruction, he raged furiously against the deputies, and declared that if he had not given them a safe-conduct, he would strike off their heads. As it was, they might return to them who sent them, and say that they must expect neither peace nor mercy. With that message ringing in their ears, they were driven out from the Count's presence.

## CHAPTER XV.

Alliance between Bruges and Ghent—Death of John Yoens—Communal Militia besiege Oudenaerd—Mediation of the Duke of Burgundy—A “double-faced” peace—Count's reception at Ghent—Raises army of mercenaries—Barbarous outrage—Surprise of Oudenaerd—Renewal of hostilities—Ghent militia repulsed at Bruges—Fatal ambush—The Count's severity at Ypres—Siege of Ghent—The Count grants an amnesty—Attacks and defeats a detachment of Ghent militia at Nevele—Capture of Grammont by Walter d'Enghien—His death.

LOUIS DE MAELE then proceeded to Lille, and concerted ulterior measures with the leading men of his party. Nor was Yoens inactive. Whilst the Count was occupied in reinforcing the garrisons of Courtrai, Oudenaerd, Dendermonde, Alost, and a few other places, the Captain of Ghent visited in person several of the adjacent towns, and strove to revive the League, or Federation, accomplished by James van Arteveld. He was aware, however, that nothing could be done without the co-operation of Bruges, and in that sense he harangued his fellow-citizens to such good purpose that an expedition was fitted out to win over that town by fair means or foul. Some ten thousand men of Ghent thus arrived within sight of the ramparts of Bruges, and a few of their leaders boldly walked up to the gate to parley with the townsmen. The guard sent for the burgomaster and magis-

trates, by which time Yoens himself appeared upon the scene. Assured that they had nothing to fear unless, by opposition, they brought mischief upon themselves, the Bruges people threw open the gate, through which the Ghent militia defiled in admirable order, and were conducted to the Grande Place. The most cordial relations were speedily established. The citizens of Bruges welcomed the Ghent burghers as friends and kinsfolk, and the latter paid liberally for whatever they required to purchase.

From Bruges Yoens repaired to Damme, the headquarters of the Mahieu faction. He was welcomed in the most demonstrative manner, but, after a joyous supper "*avecques damoiselles de la ville,*" his body became suddenly swollen, and he was placed in a litter in which to be carried back to Ghent. He died, however, on the journey, under strong suspicion of poison, to the great regret of his fellow-townsmen. His body was conveyed into the town with great reverence, and was finally buried in the church of St. Nicholas. The Leliaerds, on their part, did not affect to disguise their joy at the removal of their formidable opponent, though, in truth, nothing for a time was changed, except that Ghent had lost an honoured citizen. Four new captains were elected—Peter van den Bossche, John Pruneel, John Bolle, and Rasse d'Herzeele, who swore to maintain the liberties of the Commune. Peter van den Bossche assumed, or was appointed to, the leadership, and in that capacity marched at the head of twelve thousand men towards Deynze and Courtrai, in both of which towns he was welcomed with acclamations. Ypres was the next place to join

the league, and when the Count was informed of its defection, he is said to have exclaimed, "If we have lost Ypres this time, we shall recover it another time to their evil mischance, for I will cause so many heads to be struck off there and elsewhere that the others will be astonished."

In the meanwhile Louis applied himself to fortifying and garrisoning Oudenaerd, which commanded the navigation of the Scheldt and dominated Flanders. Upwards of eight hundred lances, representing the chivalry of Flanders, Hainault, and Artois, undertook to hold the place against all comers, and looked forward to winning much distinction in the defence of the place. By the 15th October, 1379, a hundred thousand armed men belonging to the communal militia of Flanders were encamped on the rich meadows that surround the town. To deaden the impact of the cannon balls which were poured into the place, the citizens covered their houses with earth, which also diminished the risk of a conflagration. On both sides many gallant feats of arms were performed, but in the end the beleaguered knights and their retainers began to suffer from supplies running short. Anticipating such a result, the Count was willing to listen to any reasonable overtures, and was accordingly much rejoiced when his mother, Margaret of Artois, urged the Duke of Burgundy to mediate between Louis and his rebellious subjects, if at least he ever expected to succeed to his heritage. The Duke at once adopted the most prudent measures to bring about a cessation of hostilities, and after much hesitation on the part of the Communes, he at last induced their deputies to

partake of a grand banquet, at which terms of peace were signed on both sides. The Count was pledged to grant an amnesty to all his subjects without any sort of mental reservation. He promised to respect and maintain all charters and privileges which were in force at his accession to the county. He agreed that whosoever had incurred the displeasure or distrust of the Communes should be compelled to submit to a judicial inquiry into their conduct; and in like manner with his bailiffs and guardians of castlewicks. In return for these concessions, the people of Ghent seem to have undertaken to rebuild within twelve months the Château de Wondelghem, "which report said they had burnt."

This agreement was ratified by the Count at Malines on the 1st December, 1379, and he further promised to reside for a while in the town of Ghent to prove that he bore no malice for their past misdeeds. On their part they forbore to demolish the fortifications of Oudenaerd, and their representative, John Pruneel, was magnificently entertained at Tournai by the Duke of Burgundy. The Count thereupon dismissed his adherents, and the communal militia returned to their respective homes. Nevertheless, the peace was generally and justly spoken of as "double faced," and it was safely predicted that it would not be of long duration. Neither, indeed, did Louis make any secret of his intention to adhere to his engagements only so far as it might be convenient to himself. Instead of fixing his residence in Ghent, as he had agreed to do, he declared that he would not enter that town until the principal ringleaders of the rebellion were de-



livered up to him. He even reproached the Bruges people with having allied themselves with his enemies; but, not wishing to alienate them altogether, he accepted their excuse that "the small handicrafts of the town" had got the mastery over them, and forced them to do their bidding. He also judged it expedient not to go too far with the men of Ghent. The magistrates had deputed twenty-four burghers of good repute to remind him of his promise, but they had journeyed little further than Deynze when they heard that he was already close at hand. Dividing into two lines, they formed a lane through which the Count and his knights rode superciliously. Notwithstanding their lowly obeisance and abject reverence, he scarcely deigned to notice them beyond slightly touching his cap. At Deynze the Count stopped to dinner. While he was still seated at table, the deputies entered the room and threw themselves on their knees before him, assuring him of the affection to his person borne by the inhabitants of Ghent, who had warned them that they need not think of returning unless they brought back their Count with them. The Count sternly recapitulated all the misdoings of their fellow-townsmen, which, he said, he would gladly forget if he could, but he could not. They then reminded him that he had given his word to condone the past, which he acknowledged, and, rising up, called for wine, which was handed round to the deputies.

On the morrow they all rode together to Ghent, and were met by a vast concourse of the wealthier citizens on horseback, who had gone forth to do honour to their Count. But he would hardly look at them, and

merely inclined his head from time to time. In this way he arrived at his house called "The Postern," which had been considerably damaged at the time that the Château de Wondelghem was burnt down. He there told the magistrates that he purposed to keep the peace, but that he insisted upon the suppression of the White Hoods. He further demanded compensation, or blood money, on behalf of the family of his murdered bailiff, Roger de Hauterive. The next morning the Count rode into the Friday market-place at an early hour, and found it already filled with White Hoods, a sight that filled him with apprehension as well as with anger. Dismounting from his horse, he appeared on a balcony handsomely hung with crimson cloth, and spoke at great length and with much force and dignity. He was listened to with respectful silence until he expressed his aversion for the white hoods, and desired that they might be worn no more. Then murmurs arose on all sides, in the midst of which he remounted his horse and rode to his house, remarking on the way that he feared he would never get the better of those White Hoods, a wicked and accursed race. Three days later he was on the road to Paris, where his mother had undertaken to effect a reconciliation between him and Charles V., surnamed The Wise.

The Count remained but a short time in the French capital, and was soon once more on the Flemish frontiers, where he engaged a large army of mercenaries. Emboldened by these proceedings the Leliaerds adopted red hoods and embroidered their robes with fleurs-de-lis, while the Klauwaerds, with equal childish-

ness, worked into their surcoats three lion's claws. Hostilities commenced with a horrible outrage. To avenge the death of the Bailiff of Ghent, some knights, headed by Oliver de Hauterive, seized forty or fifty vessels on the Scheldt, and put out the eyes of the mariners, whom they sent in this miserable condition to Ghent. The horrible spectacle filled the citizens with pity and indignation. Froissart expresses his astonishment that they should have dissembled towards their Count, and affected attachment whilst they were ever thinking how they could exercise their wicked and rebellious spirit. On this occasion, they surely did well to be angry, and the old chronicler admits that they cared little about personal disputes, but were so steadfastly united on the point of maintaining their franchises that they endured a seven years' war without flinching, and for the whole of that period put aside all private quarrels and jealousies. John Pruneel, the captain of the city, lost no time in striking a counter blow. Collecting in haste a small body of White Hoods he marched upon Oudenaerd, and surprised the garrison while engaged in the sports and pastimes incidental to mid-Lent. Two gates and a portion of the curtain facing the Ghent road were partially demolished, but through the treacherous intervention of three rich burghers, Simon Bette, Gilbert de Gruutere, and John van der Zichele, who secretly belonged to the Leliaerd faction, Pruneel and his companions were recalled on the 12th March, 1380. No sooner had they evacuated Oudenaerd than the fortifications were restored, and a better look-out maintained for the future. The

knights who had so cruelly ill-used the mariners were banished from Flanders, a sentence which was extended to John Pruneel on the ground that he had engaged in hostilities before war was declared. One of the caitiff knights Sir Philip de Masmines sought to fix his abode at Valenciennes, but was driven out by the Communal authorities. A worse fate awaited Pruneel. He had retired to Ath in Brabant, where he was seized by some men-at-arms—with the Duke's connivance, if we may believe Froissart—and carried off to Lille, where by the Count's orders he was beheaded.

Hostile operations now began in good earnest. On the 7th April Louis de Maele crossed the Lys, and with wanton cruelty put to death the peasants whom he found working in the fields, to prevent them from conveying tidings of his approach to the inhabitants of Ypres, as though the same end would not have been gained by making prisoners of them for a time. He did, however, march into Ypres before any danger was apprehended, and it is stated that he slew seven hundred of the unresisting citizens before he returned to Lille, to await the arrival of the mercenary bands from Germany, Burgundy, and Picardy. The Ghent militia, under their captains, Peter van den Bossche, John Bolle, Arnold Declercq, Peter de Wintere, John de Lannoy, and Rasse d'Herzeele, immediately took the field and destroyed the châteaux of the Count's partisans for many a league round the town. On their part the Leliaerds raised the Count's banner and ranged themselves under Gérard de Steenhuyze,—the avenger of Walter d'Halewyn,—Hervé d'Antoing

and Walter d'Enghien, great grandson of Robert de Béthune, a fiery youth impatient to win his spurs and entertaining an arrogant contempt for civic corporations and their militia. The first struggle took place at Ypres, where the union of the minor crafts with the weavers and fullers was fatal to the Leliaerds. Bruges was the next to declare for the common cause, but an untoward incident occurred, which might have proved very disastrous to that town. Confiding in the loyalty of the Bruges people, a small party of the men of Ghent entered the place as allies, but were unexpectedly assailed on all sides by the Leliaerds, who circulated a rumour that the Commune of Ghent had resolved to destroy Bruges entirely, to do away, once for all, with any further rivalry. Overpowered by numbers, the Ghent detachment was forced to retire, leaving behind them their dead and wounded comrades, and early in June the Count appeared in the market-place at Bruges, and congratulated the townsmen on their victory. But, for their part, they were so alarmed on hearing that the Ghent militia were at hand, after having recovered Dendermonde, that they constrained the Count to sue for peace, which was concluded on the 19th June, and broken on the 8th August, 1380.

The weavers of Bruges appealed for succour to their brother-craftsmen throughout Flanders. The Count had laid a heavy hand upon them, for having taken the part of the Ghent men who were so disloyally driven out of the town on the 13th May. He was then at Dixmude, whither he had gone to rally the population of the Franc, envious of the superior

prosperity of the great towns. The magistrates of Ypres, divining that the storm would burst in the first instance over their town, despatched a body of armed men to form a camp at Woumen to check the progress of the Leliaerds, while another detachment, co-operating with the Ghent militia, should intercept the Bruges Leliaerds who had taken the road to Dixmude. Peter van den Bossche was known to have left Ghent with about 9,000 men, and in order to effect a junction with him John Bolle and Arnold Declercq, who had four to five thousand men under their joint command, hastened from Ypres in company with a strong contingent of the militia of that town. Coming to two cross-roads the leaders had a difference of opinion, but John Bolle carried the point, and after a weary and disorderly march of two leagues or thereabout his party fell into an ambush, the enemy being also numerically superior. The cry, "We are betrayed" went up as it always does when men are led by overweening confidence in themselves to become involved in difficulties which might easily have been foreseen. "No people," says Froissart, "ever made so poor a defence as these did: they saved themselves as fast as they could, some returning to Ypres, others flying over the fields, without any sort of order." Had the men in ambush followed up their victory, scarce a single citizen of Ghent or Ypres would have seen the sun go down. As it was, no fewer than 2,400 men, equally divided between the two contingents, are believed to have perished. The survivors were finally rescued by Peter van den Bossche, but, as the run-aways were in no heart to renew the combat, it was



judged more prudent to fall back upon Courtrai. John Bolle, conscious of his innocence, returned to Ghent, where he was accused of treason, dragged out of his house into the street, and literally torn to pieces, the townsmen disputing with one another for morsels of his quivering flesh.

The camp at Woumen was incontinently broken up, and the Count entered Ypres without striking a blow. He had promised to deal mercifully with the insurgents, but his first step was to arrest and place in fetters three hundred of the most notable burghers. Seven hundred members of the weavers' guild were next beheaded, and the same sentence was executed on fourteen hundred citizens who had been carried off to Bruges, while four hundred were banished to Douai and Orchies. The most troublesome quarter of the town was then set on fire, and in this manner Louis de Maele thought to win the love and obedience of his subjects. Awed by this terrible example, Courtrai submitted while he was yet afar off, but had nevertheless to give up three hundred hostages, men of local influence and consideration.

On the 2nd September the Count sat down before Ghent, at the head of a truly formidable army. He was unable, however, to effect a complete investment of the place, or to prevent the arrival of reinforcements and convoys. The Communes of Brabant resolutely refused to have a hand in destroying the liberties of a town that had made so many and such great sacrifices for the common advantage. From Liège came words of sympathy and encouragement, and if it be true, as Froissart affirms, that Ghent con-

tained eighty thousand men fit to bear arms, it can hardly be said that their case was at all desperate. Besides, on two sides which were bound by the Scheldt and Lys—that is, towards Brussels and the country of the Quatre Métiers, then belonging to the Bishop of Utrecht—it was impossible to blockade the town, which was thus continually fresh provisioned. Several attempts made to get possession of Langerbrugge, or Longpont, were repulsed by Van den Bossche, nor did better fortune crown the skirmishes and assaults by which the Count hoped to wear out the patience of the townspeople—though on one occasion, October 23rd, 1380, Arnold Declercq was surrounded and slain, together with a considerable number of citizens. On the other hand, Gérard de Steenhuyse was taken and put to death in remembrance of his former cruelties, and several of the smaller towns opened their gates to James van der Beerst and a party of Klauwaerds from Ypres. Despairing of success Louis de Maele offered an entire amnesty for all past transgressions, and again pledged himself to respect the franchises of the Communes of Flanders. Peace was concluded, and the siege raised on the 11th November, 1380.

The Count's insincerity was, however, manifested in the instructions he gave to Walter d'Enghien, the last Duke of Athens, to garrison Oudenaerd with a strong force, including two hundred English archers, "on whom great dependence was placed"—for during the reign of the feeble Richard II., the old relations between England and the "good towns" had become changed for the worse. Skirmishing went on through-

out the winter season, as though the Count and his subjects were still at open war with one another, and as soon as the roads were once more passable, Louis de Maele set out from Bruges at the head of twenty thousand men with the avowed intention of breaking the stubborn spirit of the Ghent burghers. A little way from Nevele, he encountered a small force of their militia under the gallant Rasse d'Herzeele \* and John de Lannoy, who would have done wisely to have deferred the contest until a junction could be effected with a much larger body of their fellow-townsmen commanded by Peter van den Bossche. The latter was prevented by impracticable marshes from lending any assistance, though he was not the less accused afterwards of treachery by the Leliaerd burghers, Gilbert de Gruutere and Simon Bette. The Count's army consisted chiefly of his partisans from Bruges, Ypres, Courtrai, Oudenaerd, and the Franc, and were immensely superior in numbers to their adversaries. The battle was nevertheless long doubtful, for Rasse d'Herzeele was a doughty and experienced warrior, and encouraged his men to fight valiantly. They were, however, broken and routed, and fled in confusion into the little town of Nevele. There they partially rallied round the church and prepared to defend themselves in the tower, which had been hastily barricaded. But before they could reform their ranks

\* After distinguishing himself as a courageous enemy of the Leliaerds, his son refused to follow Philip van Arteveld to Roosebeke, and joined Charles VI. and the Duke of Burgundy in laying waste Flanders in 1385. Jealousy of Francis Ackerman is supposed to have caused his defection from the popular party.

d'Herzeele was slain, and the Count's men lighted a great fire in front of the church door. In a vain endeavour to cut their way through, John de Lannoy and his brave companions were nearly all put to the sword.

Instead of following up his success, the Count returned to Bruges, for his losses had been severe, and he may well have doubted of his ability to reduce the great and well-peopled city of Ghent, when a fraction of its militia had given him so much trouble. The magistrates of Ghent replied to the recent disaster by equipping five armies, one of which recovered the town of Grammont, though for a brief space. The spirited young squire Walter d'Enghien hurriedly collected some four thousand men, and carried Grammont by storm, but stained his victory by atrocious cruelties. He gave no quarter, and many old men, women, and children perished in the flames of their burning homesteads. A terrible reprisal awaited him. Louis de Maele had again marched against Ghent, where he was joined by the Duke of Athens, flushed with victory. The daring spirit of this youth speedily led him into an ambush, laid by the men of Grammont, whose wives, parents, and children he had caused to be massacred. Surrounded by pikes, he asked counsel of Eustace de Montigny, a gallant knight. "Counsel!" replied the other, "it is too late for counsel. Let us sell our lives as dearly as we can, for there is no question here of ransom." Numbers prevailed over knightly valour and prowess. The days of feudalism were numbered. Burghers and artisans were becoming more than a match for mail-clad warriors, their lords

and oppressors. Louis de Maele, who had been wont to address Walter d'Enghien as "fair son," instead of more formally saluting him as "cousin," is said to have shed tears over the untimely fate of the too daring youth. The siege of Ghent was raised after this melancholy event, and a suspension of arms was arranged at Harlebeke through the good offices of Albert of Bavaria, though the Count desired nothing more than a little breathing time to enable him to resume hostilities at a more convenient moment.\*

\* Froissart places the death of Walter d'Enghien after the accession to power of Philip van Arteveld, but in this he was mistaken.





## PART V.



PHILIP VAN ARTEVELD.



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### CHAPTER XVI.

Van den Bossche—Philip van Arteveld appointed Captain of the City — His antecedents and character — Execution of two Leliaerds—Philip's proclamation—Francis Ackerman obtains supplies—Duplicity of the Count—Misery at Ghent—Philip van Arteveld counsels action—Marches upon Bruges—Rout of Beverhoutsveld—Louis de Maele's adventures and escape—Submission of Bruges—Ghent revictualled.

ANARCHY reigned in Ghent. The citizens were divided amongst themselves, not merely by the old antagonism which separated the adherents of the Communes from those of the Count, but by petty jealousies between different guilds and crafts, and, above all, by distrust of one another. The population of Ghent had become utterly demoralised by the scenes of violence they had, of late, so frequently witnessed, and by the cruel sufferings they had so long endured. Hope seemed to have abandoned them. In their misery, looking back to the brief period of prosperity that had brightened their youthful days, old men recalled to mind the manly presence of the valiant leader murdered by the people he had loved so well, and were heard to murmur, "Ah, if James

van Arteveld were now alive things would not be in this state, and we should have peace when it pleased us." These words reached the ears of Peter van den Bossche, who had many a time heard John Yoens speak of the good old times when Van Arteveld was governor of the town. The suggestion was, therefore, not lost upon him. There was a great meeting of citizens on the 25th January, 1381, for the purpose of choosing a successor to Giles de Meulenaire, Captain of Ghent, who had been treacherously slain a few weeks previously by some members of the Count's faction. Several names were mentioned, but not one commanded a sufficient number of suffrages to justify his election to a post of such extreme peril and responsibility. At last, Van den Bossche stepped forward and, while acknowledging the merits of those who had been proposed, declared that there was, nevertheless, one who had been passed over whose claims far surpassed all the others. He referred to Philip van Arteveld, who had been held at the font, in St. Peter's Church, by the Queen of England, whilst his father was warring against Tournai. He reminded his hearers that never had the town of Ghent and the country of Flanders been so well governed as during the time James van Arteveld was at the head of affairs. The country, indeed, was at the point of ruin when he came forward and restored it to prosperity. What could they do better, then, than have recourse to the issue of that valiant ruler? With one accord the assembled multitude shouted that it should be so—they would have no other leader—and they demanded that he should be sent for. They were persuaded,

however, to proceed in person to Philip van Arteveld's house, and entreat him to be their governor. The task was more difficult than they had imagined, for Philip had not forgotten their ingratitude to his father, nor does he appear to have been of an ambitious disposition. In the end, however, he consented to do what they desired, and being straightway conducted to the Town-hall, was at once sworn in as chief Captain of Ghent.

Up to this date Philip van Arteveld appears to have led an obscure and tranquil life. He was evidently a dreamer, and little fitted to cope with stern realities. Whether or not he was, as reported, addicted to angling in the Lys or the Scheldt, while his country and native town were in the throes of dissolution, he was certainly more prone to habits of quietude and seclusion than to frequenting "the busy haunts of men," and taking an active interest in the turmoil of public affairs. He is depicted as a tall, handsome man, of pleasant address, and gifted with much of his father's eloquence. He was also just and equitable, and more ready to listen to the promptings of mercy than was common in those times. Neither was he devoid of courage, though less fond of martial exercises than his illustrious father. His head, too, if we may credit Froissart, was more easily affected by the power and popularity which so suddenly passed into his possession. He is represented as surrounding himself with pomp and magnificence, and apeing the semblance of royalty; but it may well be that all this was as much an invention of the enemy as the previous fiction which portrayed his father as a man of plebeian

origin, engaged in the business of one of the minor crafts, and as seeking self-aggrandizement at the cost of his country's loyalty and welfare. The ensuing narrative will show that Philip van Arteveld was great neither as a general nor as a statesman. Whatever greatness he had was thrust upon him chiefly through the accident of his birth. It is true that for an exceedingly brief space he succeeded in rescuing Ghent from imminent destruction, and also in raising it to a degree of opulence and grandeur unattained even under his father's abler administration; but the glint of sunshine was too speedily dimmed by a total eclipse in which the liberties of Flanders well-nigh perished, and during which unutterable misery overwhelmed the entire population. Philip van Arteveld, however, was more unfortunate in his biographers than even his greatly maligned predecessor. He was at least suspected of being a Lollard at heart, while still conforming to the rites of the established religion. It may be that he was only a visionary, given to self-communing, for which purpose his love of angling may have been assumed, and that he occasionally sought to fathom ecclesiastical questions which were not intended to be plumbed by the laity. In any case, suspicions were entertained of his orthodoxy, a circumstance that would suffice to prejudice against him the minds of writers in any way connected with the Church. Impartiality was not to be expected from either the Canon of Chimay or the monkish chronicler of the abbey of St. Denis—whom M. de Lettenhove would identify with one George de Mare, or de Meire, a monk of that abbey, and who also acted as secretary and notary to



Charles VI. The numerous plagiarists of those contemporary chroniclers were only careful to exaggerate and embellish the facts and fictions they found ready made to their hands, and the false bias given at the start sent the bowl rolling on ever farther and farther from the right line.

As in the old time, four other captains were nominated to co-operate with Philip van Arteveld, though in a slightly subordinate capacity. They were named Peter van den Bossche, Rasse van de Voorde, James Derycke, and John d'Heyst. Fortunately, these were all good men and true, and served loyally under their new chief. Their tenure of office narrowly escaped ending almost as soon as it began. On their return from Harlebeke the two Leliaerd burghers, Simon Bette and Gilbert de Gruutere, had found themselves in a false position through the election of Van Arteveld and his colleagues, but, with admirable courage, they resolved to stake their lives upon a final appeal to the people. Very likely, as Froissart affirms, they and their friends went about among the minor craftsmen, poisoning their minds against the Communal leaders, and exhorting them to submit themselves to the clemency of their natural lord. Be that as it might, an immense crowd gathered together in the market-place to hear the message of peace they brought from the Count. The messengers are credited with very ingenious speeches in praise of the Count's magnanimity, who was willing to pardon all their manifold misdeeds and acts of rebellion, provided they surrendered into his hands two hundred citizens to be named by himself. The proposition was re-

jected with scorn and indignation, as the Klauwaerds were for the moment the dominant faction, and the Count's representatives were arrested as traitors. Froissart pretends that they were stabbed to death on the spot by Van den Bossche and Van Arteveld, but there is reason to believe that they were brought to trial before the Communal magistrates, and, being convicted, were publicly beheaded—the one on the 2nd the other on the 4th February. A brother of Gilbert Mahieu was executed at the same time.

Judged by the laws and usages of modern civilization, these three men were not liable to death. Their offence consisted in placing their oath of allegiance to their Count above their loyalty to their fellow-townsmen. It is true, Louis de Maele paid scanty respect to the ancient privileges of the three good towns, and would have cancelled the monopolies which gave them an unfair advantage over his other subjects. On one occasion, besides, his bailiff had arrested a burgess, and had refused to surrender him to the local court of justice. But surely these differences might have been adjusted without recourse to arms, and in all probability there were other and stronger causes at work in the background. The commonalty were everywhere rising in insurrection against the nobles. In England, the throne itself was momentarily shaken by Wat Tyler and his associates, while in France the capital city was twice in the hands of the populace—the first time under Stephen Marcel, and afterwards under the Maillotins. The contest was premature. Both sides made a cruel abuse of every temporary advantage that fell to their lot, but it was inevitable

that in the long run victory should remain with the mail-clad warriors, familiar with some sort of organization and discipline, and who fought, besides, in the open, while their adversaries were for the most part shut up within their walls—always a disheartening position.

Philip van Arteveld celebrated his election to the leadership of the city by a proclamation which enjoined the suppression of all private hatreds until the fourteenth day after the conclusion of peace. It declared that whoso took a man's life should lose his head, and that a rigorous imprisonment for forty days should be awarded to combatants, even though they parted without giving or receiving a wound. A similar punishment awaited those who blasphemed and frequented houses of ill-fame, who played with dice, or stirred up sedition among the people. An account of public receipts and expenditure was to be made out every month. The Communal magistrates were to sit with open doors. Finally, every inhabitant of Ghent was to wear a white sleeve inscribed with the words: "Godt helpt my." The greatest and most urgent necessity, however, was to secure an adequate and permanent supply of provisions. A fleet had been despatched to Holland and Zealand to procure the necessaries of life, while Francis Ackerman, a patriot who afterwards took a prominent part in public affairs, conducted a body of armed men, whose numbers have been variously computed from three to twelve thousand, into Brabant and up to the very gates of Brussels. The Duke had forbidden his subjects to carry food supplies to Ghent, but permitted them to deal with

any persons who came to purchase and fetch away their superfluities. The magistrates of Brussels caused the gates to be closed, as it seemed a hazardous proceeding to admit some thousands of hungry men furnished with weapons of war, but Ackerman sent an unarmed deputation to offer to pay for provisions for the sake of their townsmen famishing at home. They were allowed to remain and recruit their strength and to advance as far as Louvain.

From that town Ackerman, accompanied by twelve citizens of repute, proceeded to Liège and made such a favourable impression upon the Bishop that he promised to intercede with the Count on their behalf. The magistrates even expressed great sympathy with their sufferings in the common cause of all Communes, and said that were their country as near as that of Brabant or Hainault they would gladly assist them. Under existing circumstances, they could do no more than give them every facility for the purchase of five or six hundred cart-loads of corn and flour. In the space of forty-eight hours Ackerman and his companions collected six hundred carts on hire, with which they set out on their homeward journey. On rejoining his people under the walls of Brussels, Ackerman and two of his friends waited upon the Duchess, in the absence of the Duke, and implored her intercession, which she graciously promised to employ. As the convoy approached Ghent the inhabitants poured out through the gates to meet them, and immense rejoicing ensued, though for a very little while. The provisions thus obtained were sufficient for only fifteen days, but, as the old chronicler remarks, "to those who are without

comfort a little thing gives hope." The carts were carefully taken back to their owners, after their contents had been equitably divided among the citizens.

The Bishop of Liège and the Duchess of Brabant faithfully executed their engagements, and besought the Count to be merciful to his subjects. Unwilling to offend such powerful personages, Louis de Maele consented to convene a Council to be held at Tournai at the end of Easter, 1382. Deputies from Liège, Brabant, and Hainault accordingly proceeded to that town, where they were met by twelve deputies from Ghent headed by Van Arteveld, who were instructed to accept any terms however harsh, provided that no one was to be put to death. And Froissart states that "Philip van Arteveld was willing, if he should have angered the earl ever so little, during the time he was governor of Ghent, to be one of the banished men for life, out of the regard he had for the lower ranks of the people." No one, however, appeared on the part of the Count until the deputies from the three States despatched some of their number to Bruges to ask for an explanation. Four of the most distinguished of his adherents were then sent to Tournai to excuse the Count's absence, and to state his decision with regard to Ghent. He required all the inhabitants of that town, from the age of fifteen to that of sixty, to come forth, bare-headed, in their shirts, with halters round their necks, as far as Buscampveld, half-way between Bruges and Ghent, where he would meet them and determine how many he would pardon, how many he would put to death. The Ghent deputies were overwhelmed with dismay on receiving this ruthless *ulti-*



*matum*, but reserved their answer until the matter had been submitted to their fellow-townsmen. The meeting then broke up after an interchange of good wishes, and Philip van Arteveld and his companions returned home in sadness, after discharging their hotel bills, as Froissart takes care to mention. "The Count of Flanders," he continues, "never made an inquiry what was the answer of the Ghent deputies, so very cheap did he hold them." He believed, indeed, that the town could not hold out many days longer, and in that prevision had summoned his vassals from all parts to join him at Bruges at the festival of the Holy Blood, when, after walking in that solemn procession, they would set out together "to destroy" those troublesome burghers.

It was on the 29th April, 1382, that the deputies made their melancholy entry into Ghent. The people crowded around their leader, and entreated him to give them a word of hope and encouragement, but he rode on in silence, holding down his head. At length he bade them go home, and rest in peace until the morrow, when at nine in the morning he would be in the market-place, and would tell them all he knew. They obeyed with sorrowful forebodings, but to Peter van den Bossche the whole truth was told as soon as the crowd had dispersed. "In a few days," replied that doughty soldier, "the town of Ghent shall be the most honoured town in Christendom, or the most humbled."

On the morrow, at the appointed hour, the market-place was thronged with an anxious multitude, craving to know their fate. Briefly as circum-

stances would permit, Philip van Arteveld reported what had been done at Tournai, and rehearsed the Count's message. When he had done speaking, there burst forth a tumult of lamentation, men, women, and children shrieking, sobbing, and bewailing aloud their own and their neighbours' misery. After the first demonstrations of despair had somewhat subsided, their captain again addressed them. He pointed out to his hearers that there was no time to waste. Some sort of decision must be arrived at without delay, if they would live, and not die of hunger. Thirty thousand human beings within the walls of Ghent, he said, had not tasted bread for a fortnight. Three courses only were open to them. The first was to shut themselves in, and bank up the gates of the town with earth. Then confess themselves humbly and penitently, and filling the churches and monasteries pass away with resignation. God would have mercy upon their souls, and wherever their piteous story was told men would say that they had perished with courage and loyalty. Or they might act in a different way. They might go forth, with bare heads and feet, and a rope round their necks, and ask mercy of the Count. He could not be so hard-hearted, or so lifted up with pride, as not to be softened by such a spectacle and moved to compassion. For his own part, he would be the first to offer the sacrifice of his own head, and would gladly die for the love he bore to his fellow-townsmen. There was, however, yet another alternative. They might pick out five thousand of the most helpful and best armed citizens, and march out to Bruges and give battle to the Count. If they fell in



this enterprise, it would be with honour, and God would have mercy upon them. Men, too, would say that they had upheld, and maintained, their quarrel right valiantly. And if God, who in ancient times strengthened the hand of Judith to slay Holofernes, should take the like pity on them, they would be the most honoured of all peoples since the days of the Romans.

The citizens listened in silence, and then, after a moment's pause, voices were heard imploring the leader of the town to decide for them. This he did without hesitation, and pronounced in favour of the third course as the safest as well as the most worthy of freemen. Then they shouted as one man, that this was their will likewise, and in no other way would they act. They were accordingly bidden to repair to their homes, and await the visit of the officers instructed to select five thousand of the bravest and most capable men. The gates were immediately closed, and no one was allowed to leave the town under any pretext, so that no tidings should be carried to Bruges of the desperate resolution taken by the men of Ghent. The town, it will be observed, was not, strictly speaking, besieged. It was blockaded within a circle of considerable circumference, but the larger the inclosed territory the greater was the difficulty of finding food for the people. Agriculture had been too much neglected and despised even by the rural population, and the country itself had of late been so frequently devastated, that no supplies could be obtained except from a distance, and those sources had been cut off by the Count's allies or by his own partisans. Neither does

it appear that capital was employed, to any sensible extent, in laying up corn and flour against seasons of danger and scarcity, and thus it came to pass that within an exceedingly brief space of time the populous town of Ghent more than once passed from the unrestrained enjoyment of luxuries to the absolute want of the commonest necessities of life. But never had the people been reduced to such positive destitution as on this occasion. When the small army of fighting men was declared ready to take the field, it was found that no more provisions could be scraped together for their sustenance than could be put into five carts, while two more were devoted to the transport of two pipes of wine, all that remained within the town. Two hundred carts, however, were loaded with cannon and with machines for hurling projectiles. As the host defiled through the gate, priests with uplifted hands blessed them in the name of the God of Battles, and bade them go forth with brave hearts, for Heaven was on their side; while the people told them they need not return if discomfited, for they would only find their families buried beneath the ruins of their homes.

Towards the close of the first day halt was made near the village of Somerghem, but on the following day the men of Ghent pushed on to Oedelem, where they suddenly turned aside and took up a position on the extensive Common of Beverhoutsveld. In front they were protected by a wide and impracticable marsh, and on their flanks they made a sort of laager of their carts, besides driving in long stakes and digging entrenchments, to check the onslaught of the men-at-arms. During their march they had contented them-

selves with such provisions as they had succeeded in obtaining from the fields and villages, for they desired to husband for the last effort the scanty store they had brought with them. After despatching another message to the Count praying for pardon, they laid themselves down in their ranks and sought in sleep a respite from care and hunger. At dawn on Saturday, May 3rd, 1382, Van Arteveld and the other captains went round the camp, exhorting every man to do his duty, for as they acquitted themselves that day so would it fare with their aged parents, their wives and little ones, already at the point of starvation. Seven Grey Friars, who had accompanied the militia, celebrated mass, and preached at great length to inspire them with the courage of faith. Very many confessed themselves and received the Sacrament, in the firm resolution to win or die. The provision carts were then unloaded, and a frugal breakfast was provided for each—and each knew that it was his last meal unless victory was on their side that day.

Meanwhile the minor crafts of Bruges gave themselves up to feasting and drinking, and, blinded by their miserable jealousy, hoped to make an end of the rivalry of Ghent. Heated with wine and beer, they suddenly sallied out of the gate leading to Beverhoutsveld in a broken disorderly mass, shouting and singing, and already imagining themselves the conquerors. In vain the Count and his war-trained knights and barons strove to restore order, and to persuade the citizens to wait yet another day, by which time their enemies would be too exhausted by hunger to offer any serious resistance. The presumptuous and intoxi-

cated mob would listen to neither advice nor commands. They still pressed onward, their confusion increasing as they rolled and staggered along the league of sandy road that led to the enemy's position. Confronted by the marsh, they turned aside and were dazzled by the rays of the setting sun shining on their eyes. At the same time, the Ghent artillery opened at close quarters a heavy fire of iron and stone balls upon their exposed flank, while, with ringing shouts of "Ghent! Ghent!" the militia of that town sprang out of their entrenchments and fell upon their assailants sword in hand. The shock was irresistible. Terror took the place of arrogance, and the unorganised mob fled for their lives. Trampling upon one another as they fell in their headlong route, and never pausing to strike a single blow in self defence, they were struck down, stabbed, and speared by the pursuers, to whom their unexpected victory had imparted a feverish strength and fury. After a feeble attempt to rally the fugitives at Assebroucke, the Count's officers were swept away by the panic-stricken crowd, and at last, when the sun had gone down, Louis de Maele, at the head of a small band of men-at-arms, galloped into the town and sought safety in his palace.

His first step was to send orders to the guards at the gates of the town to close them alike upon friends and foes, but it was already too late, for the enemy had made good their entrance and were advancing in excellent order to the market-place. Meanwhile the Count had sent messengers throughout the town, summoning the inhabitants to meet him in front of the Town-hall, whither he himself proceeded with as many armed

retainers as he had been able to collect, and lighted by torches. On the way he was met by a knight named Robert Maerschaleck, the husband of one of his illegitimate daughters, who warned him that the Ghent men were in possession of the market-place. He was in no mood, however, to listen to words of caution, and pushed forward till he perceived the banner of Ghent where he had intended to plant his own. Awakening to a sense of his supreme peril, he instantly ordered the torches to be extinguished, and told his followers to shift every man for himself. Concealing himself for a moment behind the chapel of St. Amand, he borrowed a cloak from a valet to throw over his armour, and stole away into the darkness, for it was then midnight.

Presently he encountered a citizen of Ghent, named Regnier Campioen, who at once recognised him, but compassionating his mischance, helped him to gain a hovel, the door of which was half open. An elderly woman was seated in front of a few pieces of smouldering peat, the smoke from which hung heavy in the scantily furnished room, from which a ladder communicated with the loft in which her children were asleep. The woman was naturally startled on seeing two men walk in at that hour, but the Count exclaimed: "Save me, I am thy lord, the Count of Flanders." Happily, she knew him by sight, for she had many a time received alms and doles of broken meat from his steward. Forgetful of herself, she hastened to entreat him to mount the ladder, and hide beneath the wretched bed in which her children were laid. Campioen, after seeing that Louis was



safe for the moment, returned into the street and fell in with a party of men who were looking for the Count. Joining himself to them he again entered the hovel, where the woman was found seated by the fire, nursing her youngest child. Anticipating his companions, Campioen mounted the ladder, and affected to search about the loft, of which he made a good report to those below. A few minutes afterwards they retired, and the Count was left to meditate on the consequences of his misrule.

During the darkness of the night many scenes of violence inevitably occurred. The weavers and fullers had united themselves to the men of Ghent as soon as they entered the market-place, but several of the smaller crafts, such as the butchers, fishermen, jerkin-makers, and furriers\* remained faithful to the Count, and prepared to renew the struggle. They were, however, easily overpowered, and not a few of them were put to the sword. It may also have happened, as Froissart affirms, that there was a good deal of pilaging, and that women were occasionally ill-treated; but he also admits that never was a captured town more leniently dealt with, and that only those suffered against whom strong evidence was forthcoming. In reality, the only offence of which the Bruges men had been guilty was that of loyalty to the Count, and of thinking more of their own immediate material interests than of those of their neighbours. This was the case with each of the good towns, which in many

\* Colonel Johnes renders "*vairriers*" into "glassmen," after the fashion of those who gave Cinderella a glass slipper instead of a slipper lined with miniver—mistaking "*vair*" for "*verre*."



respects, and especially in selfishness, resembled the ancient Greek and more modern Italian Republics. Against a foreign enemy they were capable of a temporary coalition, but in ordinary times they were divided by mutual rivalries and internecine contests.

When daylight returned, Philip van Arteveld and Peter van den Bossche applied themselves vigorously to the restoration of order. Prompt measures were taken to provide for the safety of foreign traders, and particularly of Englishmen. All rioting and plundering were strictly prohibited. Solemn thanksgivings were offered up in the different churches. Long trains of carts and waggons, laden with wine and provisions, were hastily despatched to Ghent from Bruges, Damme, and Sluys, so that plenty took the place of privation. Business was everywhere re-established. Confidence revived, and the people acknowledged that Van Arteveld was worthy to rule them. No traces, however, could be discovered of the Count. The 4th of May was spent by him in his humble asylum, but at night he contrived, dressed like a labourer, to cross the town moat in a small boat. He knew nothing of the country, and, after wandering about for some time at random, the sound of human voices made him crouch behind some bushes. Presently he recognised the voice of Sir Robert Maerschalk, his own son-in-law, who naively asked him by what means he had got away from Bruges. "Come, come, Robert," cried the Count, with some humour, "Is this a time to be telling one's adventures? Try to get me a horse, for I am tired of walking, and put me on the road to Lille if you know the way." This happened at St.

Michael's, near Crænenberg, but it was easier to wish for a mount than to obtain one. At last, a peasant was persuaded to part with his mare, and without saddle or pad Louis de Maele jogged on till he reached Roulers, where he alighted at a humble hostelry, and threw himself on the loyalty of the innkeeper. "Save me," he again cried, "I am thy lord, the Count of Flanders;" and again the Flemish sentiment of fidelity was his safeguard. The good man furnished him with the best horse in his stables, and accompanied him to Lille, where many Leliaerds speedily assembled, and where he heard of the death of his mother, who bequeathed to him the County of Artois. The inheritance came at an opportune moment, for his treasures were exhausted. But the lessons of adversity were thrown away upon his light and heedless disposition. He had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, and was only solicitous to master his rebellious subjects, and punish them without mercy.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The rival Popes—Wreckage of the Count's château at Maele—  
Magnificence of Philip van Arteveld—Siege of Oudenaerd—  
Gallant defence—Use of artillery—Destitution of the garrison  
—The Flemish camp—Louis de Maele appeals to the Duke of  
Burgundy—Charles VI. summons *ban* and *arrière-ban*—Philip  
van Arteveld claims the king's mediation—Flemish mission to  
Richard II.—Charles VI. takes nominal command of his army  
—Passage of the Lys—Van den Bossche's position turned—  
His defeat.

THE task was every day growing more difficult. The effect produced by the rout of Beverhoutsveld was far greater than the nature of the disaster merited. It was everywhere represented as the victory of the commonalty over the nobles, whereas it was simply the discomfiture of a drunken, disorderly rabble by a handful of desperate men, to whom defeat would have been synonymous with death and the destruction of all that was dear to them. The Roman Pope, Urban VI., rejoiced that his adherents had triumphed over those of Pope Clement VII. at Avignon, though in his heart he must have sympathised with the Count, driven from his territories by a noisy democracy. In France and in England the plebeians were stimulated to cherish hopes doomed to early disappointment, while throughout Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault the utmost enthusiasm was exhibited. The Ghent leaders,

however, were not disposed to loosen their hold upon the faithless and inconstant inhabitants of Bruges. They resolved to demolish two gates and a considerable extent of curtain on the side facing the Ghent road, and to fill up the moat with the materials and rubbish. Philip van Arteveld is described by Froissart as living in great state and splendour, occupying the Count's town residence, and being served with lordly magnificence. In this description there is probably some exaggeration, though it cannot be denied that he was much more addicted to pomp and pleasure than his more earnest and statesmanlike father. A detachment of the men of Ghent, it is added, repaired to the Count's country house at Maele, about two English miles beyond the walls, and carried off everything that was portable. An immense quantity of booty, including the Gilded Dragon\* that now surmounts the belfry at Ghent, was removed to that city, whose inhabitants were soon taught the wholesome, if bitter lesson, that no town or country that abuses victory will long escape defeat. Two hundred hostages were likewise selected from among the most respectable of the Count's partisans, and marched off into a sort of honourable exile.

From Bruges Van Arteveld proceeded to Ypres, where he was received with joyous acclamations. From that town he returned to Ghent, which he

\* According to M. Delepierre, this famous dragon, which was made of copper gilt, originally surmounted the dome of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and was sent by the Emperor Baldwin, Count of Flanders, to Bruges, where it was placed over the Cloth-hall tower. Its removal to Ghent produced bad blood between the two quarrelsome towns.

entered in triumph. Even his partial historian, M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, is compelled to confess that success had thrust aside simplicity and moderation, and that the Count himself would have displayed less prodigality. The new Belieder van de Stad had as many valets in hourly attendance, and as many noble coursers in his stables, as if he had been some mighty potentate. Every day trumpets sounded at the gates of his lordly mansion, in which, dressed in scarlet robes, lined with miniver, he entertained the fairest ladies of the land at sumptuous banquets. It may here be noted that James van Arteveld was never—as is generally stated—appointed Rewaerd of Flanders. He was never more than the Belieder van de Stad, nor was his authority so unconstitutionally despotic as the power assumed by his son. By virtue of his assumed leadership, Philip van Arteveld summoned the towns of Flanders to send their militia to combat the common enemy. The summons was obeyed with such alacrity that, in the early days of June, 100,000 armed men were encamped on the banks of the Scheldt. The point of attack was Oudenaerd, garrisoned by a valiant body of knights under the command of Sir Daniel d'Halewyn, an intrepid and experienced captain, who had pledged his word to Louis de Maele that he would hold out to the last extremity, and nobly did he redeem his pledge.

Louis himself had quitted Lille as too exposed to a sudden surprise, and had withdrawn first to Hesdin, and then to Bapaume. In the town last named he was guilty of the unpardonable cowardice and cruelty of striking off the heads of his hostages from Courtrai, on the ground

that their townsmen had leagued themselves with the inhabitants of Ghent. But, however personally unworthy may have been the Count, too much praise cannot be awarded to the devoted courage of his adherents. Their knightly valour, indeed, would have availed them but little, had Van Arteveld listened to the enthusiastic counsels of his companions. One and all demanded the signal for the assault, the success of which was a certainty, though it might be at the cost of many valuable lives. At that supreme moment, Philip van Arteveld was wanting alike to himself and to his country. Whether he shrank from "blood-guiltiness"—an idea conceived in a degenerate age—or whether, which is more probable, he affected the sustained exhibition of supreme power, the result was the same. He refused to give the signal, and declared his intention of reducing the place without the effusion of a single drop of blood. He put his faith in his multitudinous artillery of all sizes, shapes, and denominations; and, had the art of making gunpowder attained its present excellence, the monstrous projectiles of those days must speedily have battered a breach in stone-built walls, unless, indeed, a greater explosive power had proved fatal to the machines themselves.

According to Froissart, an enormous engine, forty feet in length and twenty wide, was erected on the summit of a low hill overlooking the town. It was called a Sheep,\* and cast huge stones and beams of

\* The "Truye," or Sow, was a more formidable engine even than the "Mouton," or Sheep, for it not only cast stones 200 lbs. in weight, but could be wheeled close up to the battered walls. Its name was derived from the number of soldiers it was capable of



wood that crushed everything they struck. An immense mortar, fifty feet in length, was also employed to "alarm the garrison," the report of which "was so loud that it seemed as if all the devils in hell had broken loose." The detonation "might be heard five leagues off in the daytime and ten at night," but nothing is said about the damage it inflicted. Christine de Pisan, quoted by M. de Lettenhove, makes mention of 248 pieces of artillery of iron or copper, designed for recovering Calais from the English in 1377, some of which were capable of discharging stones four to five hundred pounds in weight. The largest was called the Montfort, for which 150 bits of rock were provided by way of ammunition; but these monstrous machines were seldom fired more than half-a-dozen times in a day, and not often with much effect. The smaller pieces, called *ribaude*—in French *ribaudequins*—which were used at Tournai and elsewhere, consisted of several barrels bound together by a band of iron, but they do not appear to have wrought much mischief to the walls.

The blockade was more efficacious than the uproar of the artillery. The commander of the garrison had at an early period turned out of the town the greater part of the population, and those who remained were locked up in the churches and monasteries, so that their cries and lamentations should not unnerve the fighting men.

containing when run up to the foot of a breach. There was also another engine employed in this siege, the missiles from which were large bars and bolts of hot copper. These various machines appear to have been full of sound and fury, but were of very little actual efficiency.

Nevertheless, they had to be fed as well as the soldiers, and, although they were put on short rations, they helped to diminish the small store of provisions. Disaffection, however, first showed itself among the regular troops, whose pay had fallen into arrears, and who could only be silenced by a burgher offering to advance six thousand francs, provided that sum were lodged by the Count in the hands of a certain money-changer at Valenciennes. A serving man undertook to notify this arrangement to Louis de Maele, who was then idling away his time at Hesdin. The brave fellow succeeded in crossing the Scheldt at night and in making his way through the camp of the besiegers, and the Count was roused from his shameless indolence to make an appeal to his son-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, one of the uncles of the weak-minded boy-king, Charles VI.

In the meanwhile, the Flemish leaguer resembled a fair rather than a camp. Van Arteveld had caused piles to be driven into the bed of the river to impede navigation, but this did not prevent the ample provisionment of his own mighty host. Wooden buildings were constructed for the display of cloths, furs, and merceries. A regular market was held every Saturday, which was frequented by dealers in agricultural produce for miles round, while taverns for the sale of French and Rhenish wines were as plentiful as in Brussels. Frenchmen alone were denied access to this gathering of festive warriors; but from Brabant, Hainault, Liège, and even Germany traders and visitors were continually going to and fro. All this ill-timed luxury was, however, injurious to discipline—

always difficult to be maintained in an army of civic volunteers. A band of marauders, for they cannot be called soldiers, detached themselves from the host with the avowed purpose of plundering and destroying the country houses of the great Leliaerd lords, who favoured the Count. In the course of their ravages they arrived at Maele, where "they found the silver cradle in which he (the Count) had been nursed, and the bathing-tub in which he had been washed, both of which they entirely demolished"—the font in which he was baptised had been broken to pieces immediately after the Count's flight from Bruges. The chapel was now pulled down by these sacrilegious vagabonds, who carried the bell to the governors of Bruges, and were thanked for their services. From Bruges they wandered away to the environs of Lille, where they fired some windmills and burnt some villages, but this time they did not escape with perfect impunity, for some of the inhabitants sallied forth and attacked them with so much spirit that a considerable number were slain on the spot, and others, being made prisoners and carried into Lille, had their heads struck off. The survivors, however, took their way to Tournai, and set fire to Seclin and some other places situated in French territory.

The Count of Flanders had now a decent pretext for claiming the aid of France. He accordingly set out for Bapaume, where he laid before the Duke of Burgundy a piteous account of the straits to which he was reduced. The Duke naturally compassionated one of his own order who had suffered so much at the hands of the baser sort, nor was he less anxious to

restore peace and tranquillity to the noble territory which would one day devolve upon himself and his heirs. His cause, moreover, had become the King's also, in consequence of the foolish incursion of the Flemings into France. He therefore hastened to Senlis, where the Court then resided, and was engaged in consultation with his brother, the Duke de Berri, when the young King sauntered into the room, hawk on wrist, and demanded to know what they were talking about. He was then told how Philip van Arteveld was besieging Oudenaerd after driving the Count of Flanders out of his own land, and how, not content with defying his own lord, he had sent his troops to burn and ravage the frontiers of France. Charles VI. had long indulged in silly dreams derived from listening to the romances of chivalry, and had vainly fancied that he too could be a hero. He easily lent himself, therefore, to the interested designs of his uncles, for a brief space living in harmony and working in unison, and when the Duke de Bourbon added his influence to that of his brothers, the King issued orders to summon the *ban* and *arrière-ban* of the realm to meet him at Arras.

Philip van Arteveld seems to have been under the impression that the youthful monarch would side with the Communes against their Count, and had therefore delayed making overtures to the King of England. He still adhered to his design of reducing the garrisons of Oudenaerd and Dendermonde by famine, and in the long run he would, of course, have succeeded. Frequent sallies were made with varying fortune, but no perceptible progress had been achieved by the

besiegers when Philip resolved to appeal to Charles VI. to mediate between the Communes and their liege lord. A humble and respectful letter was accordingly addressed to the King, setting forth the wrongs and grievances of which the people of Flanders justly complained, and entreating his gracious intercession. The letter was read aloud at the Council Board, and greeted with derisive laughter. The bearer of it was even thrown into prison for presuming to approach the Court without a safe-conduct, nor was he liberated for three weeks. The King's uncles were nevertheless reluctant to drive the Flemings to despair. It seemed a safer course to create disunion among them by reviving their ancient jealousies of one another, and by promising to these the privileges which were denied to those. Certain knights and bishops were therefore instructed to repair to Tournai as if to open negotiations, but the Communes demanded, as a preliminary, the evacuation of Dendermonde and Oudenaerd. The envoys were consequently compelled to content themselves with writing identical notes to the magistrates of the three good towns, in which they expressed their readiness to open direct communications with them. If their intention was to act secretly without Van Arteveld's knowledge, the envoys were doomed to disappointment. Philip chanced to be in Ghent when the letter for that town arrived, and it was immediately placed in his hands; those directed to Bruges and Ypres were also forwarded to him. On the 20th October, 1382, he brought these irregular proceedings to a close by publishing a manifesto in which he reviewed and justified the conduct of the Communes,

and held Charles VI. responsible for whatever might ensue if he refused to mediate between the Count and his subjects. As for his armies and the puissance of his kingdom, nothing, he added, was to be apprehended from that quarter. The King's uncles were not unreasonably angered by the tone of this remonstrance, and applied themselves seriously to the equipment of a force which should bear down everything before it.

Philip van Arteveld, convinced too late that nothing was to be expected from Royal mediation, persuaded the Communal magistrates to send envoys to London to solicit the alliance and protection of Richard II. Among them were Francis Ackerman, Rasse van de Voorde, and John de West, a learned theologian who had made himself of some importance in the papal schism. On their safe arrival in London they were admitted to audience of the King, in presence of the Duke of Lancaster, and of the Earls of Buckingham, Kent, and Salisbury. They were received with much kindness, and the English commonalty even manifested great sympathy for those of their order in Flanders who stood in such peril of their lives and liberties. But it must be confessed that the Flemish envoys exhibited little tact or knowledge of the world, if it be true that they required of Richard the prompt payment of 200,000 old crowns—each worth seven shillings and sixpence—alleged to have been borrowed by his grandfather, Edward III. Had they withheld that impracticable demand, it seemed to Froissart not improbable that the King would have crossed the Channel to their assistance at the head of a powerful



army. As it was, the Lords of the Council "looked on the Flemings as proud and presumptuous, in thus demanding a debt of 200,000 old crowns of so very ancient a date as forty years."

Notwithstanding the great exertions made by the King's uncles to assemble an army before the season for warlike operations had closed, it was the 4th November before Charles VI. arrived at Arras. He had previously received the homage of the Count of Flanders, and had promised to make his quarrel his own, but it was still undecided at what point the invasion of Flanders could be safely attempted. With ordinary vigilance and promptitude of action on the part of the Flemings, it would have been impossible to cross the Lys. On that head no blame can be attached to Philip van Arteveld. He had done all that a prudent commander could be expected to do. He had instructed Peter van den Bossche to repair to Comines, to break down the bridge, and hold the post against all comers. To Peter de Wintere, one of his best captains, he had assigned the bridge at Warneton, and the charge of breaking down all the bridges on either side of that hamlet, while he himself proceeded to Ypres to rouse the citizens to a courageous defence of their liberties.

Much diversity of opinion prevailed in the French camp. Some were in favour of ascending the Lys to its source, but to this it was objected that owing to the heavy rains the surrounding country must be a morass impassable for men-at-arms. Others proposed to cross the Scheldt at Tournai, and march direct upon Oudenærd. But the constable, Oliver de Clisson, insisted

that they must cross the Lys somehow at the nearest point, and give battle to the Flemings before they were joined by their English auxiliaries. For it had been given out by Van Arteveld that an English fleet, impelled by a westerly breeze, was making for Calais, whence powerful reinforcements would speedily march to his aid. These vain boastings may have encouraged his own men, but they had likewise the effect of hastening the movements of the French army. A Flemish knight, a partisan of the Count, served as the Constable's guide, and undertook with a body of 1,800 labourers to repair the roads and facilitate the advance of the van-guard, which consisted of 6,400 men-at-arms, 14,000 crossbow men, and 5,000 foot soldiers recruited in Artois, and of much the same type as the Communal militia. The Count of Flanders had raised some 16,000 men to ravage his own territory, and it is estimated that the entire army, nominally commanded by Charles VI. in person, amounted to 80,000 men, including a large number of undisciplined Bretons, good for mere fighting, but hard to hold in hand, and grievously addicted to plundering.

It had been planned that the Lys should be crossed at Comines, but on arriving opposite that little town, it was discovered that the bridge was partially destroyed. The art of reconnoitering a country about to be traversed appears to have been unknown in those days. Armies marched straight forward till they were pulled up by an unfordable river, a fortified town, or an enemy in battle array. On this occasion, the van-guard halted on the right bank of the Lys, and looking across beheld Peter van den Bossche,

armed with an axe, in front of a body of nine to ten thousand Flemings. There was no ford on either side of Comines, and the Constable was constrained to acknowledge the necessity of ascending the course of the river to Aire, where a bridge still existed. The wisdom of the veteran was, however, outrun by the happy audacity of a few young lords, to whom a retreat was an unacceptable operation. It happened that three small boats had been brought from Lille, which were now secretly launched at some little distance below the town. Posts were driven into the bank on either side as soon as these boats had made their first passage, and strong ropes were carried across to work the ferry. By this means, the lords of Sainpy, Enghien, Vertaing, and some other knights established themselves on the other side behind the shelter of a belt of alders. Marshal de Sancerre presently joined them with 400 mail-clad warriors, on foot, but armed with long lances, against which the Flemish pikes were futile. The Constable was almost driven to despair when he heard of this rash proceeding, and indulged for a while in vain exclamations.\* But "Oliver, the Butcher," was a thorough soldier, and quickly conformed his plans to the exigencies of the moment. While his bravest knights continued to make good the passage of the river, he occupied the

\* "Ah, St. Ives! ha, St. George! ha, Our Lady! what do I see there? . . . Ah, Rohan! ah, Laval! ah, Rieux! ah, Beaumanoir! ah, Longueville! ah, Rochefort! ah, Mauny! ah, Males-troit! ah, Conversant! ah, such a one and such a one, how afflicted am I for you all! when, without consulting me, you have run into such imminent danger. And why am I Constable of France?" &c., &c.—Johnes' "*Froissart*," vol. vi., ch. xxxv. Edit. 1808.

attention of the Flemings by a furious discharge of artillery, as though he were determined to gain possession of the ruined bridge. Towards nightfall, Peter van den Bossche discovered to his dismay that his flank was turned, but rejected the advice of those who urged an immediate attack upon the Frenchmen before they could be further reinforced.

It was a terrible night for the brave De Saimpy and his adventurous comrades. The wind blew cold and shrill, rain, mingled with sleet, fell without cessation, and a thick, slabby mud was their only couch. Provisions had they none, and sleep came to few. With the earliest dawn, the Flemings advanced confidently to the attack of these wearied, frozen, half-famished Frenchmen, who stood firm, and with their long lances and well-tempered Bordeaux blades made terrible havoc in the ranks of their assailants. These presently fell into disorder—disheartened by the death of “a wise woman,” who had predicted that she would be the first to shed the enemy’s blood as the signal of victory, whereas she herself was the first to fall. At this critical moment, Peter van den Bossche was disabled by two severe wounds, one through the shoulder, and one on the head, while his brother was slain in attempting to defend him. He was, however, extricated and borne to the rear, and his followers had begun to rally and show a bold front, when shrieks of despair were heard from the ramparts of Comines. In the general confusion, the Constable had sufficiently repaired the bridge to render it passable, and the entire van-guard, supported by the Count’s contingent, defiled across and gained the left bank of the Lys.

The town was sacked, and the inhabitants were cut down even at the foot of the altar. The flames of the blazing houses were soon rivalled and surpassed by the conflagration of the opulent town of Wervicq, the plunder of which enriched the barbarous Bretons beyond their most covetous dreams.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Charles VI. crosses the Lys—Disturbances in Paris—Louis de Maele ignored by the King's uncles—Devastation of the Franc—Van Arteveld takes post at Roosebeke—Evil auguries—Battle of Roosebeke—Death of Philip van Arteveld—Slaughter of the Flemings—Destruction of Courtrai—Submission of Flanders—Cruel ravages—Charles VI. returns to Paris—Religious war between the Count and his subjects—The bishop of Norwich invades Flanders—His successes—Repulsed at Ypres—Returns to England—Surprise of Oudenaerd by Ackerman—Agitation in France and Flanders—Mysterious death of Louis de Maele—His obsequies—Decay of Feudalism—Growth of democracy—A few last words.

CHARLES VI. was at the abbey of Marquette when the news arrived of the forcing of the pass of Comines, and that the vanguard had crossed the Lys. Having heard mass and drained a cup of wine, the King rapidly followed, rode over the bridge, and lodged for that Tuesday night amid the smouldering ruins of the town. On the morrow, the camp was pitched on Mount St. Eloi, barely a league from Ypres, whence the foragers ravaged the country far and wide. The French camp resembled a fair even more closely than did the Flemish camp before Oudenaerd, except that articles of great value were sold for ridiculously low prices. The Bretons were not disposed to encumber themselves with furs or richly embroidered cloths and brocades. They even despised



jewels, and cared only for silver and gold. Discipline was fatally loosened. It was impossible to keep the soldiers with their colours. Many went off to their distant homes loaded with booty. Disquieting news also arrived from Paris. The commonalty had broken out in a truly Parisian fashion. They had stopped the convoy of provisions intended for the army, and threatened to destroy the Louvre and the other royal castles and residences in the city and suburbs. They were fortunately restrained from the work of destruction by Nicholas the Fleming, who advised them not to commit themselves too far until they heard the result of the operations against the men of Ghent. They went on, however, forging and purchasing armour and weapons, and preparing for the defence of their ancient privileges, which they knew to be in danger from the headstrong wilfulness of the half-mad young King. Everything depended upon the success of the Royal army in Flanders. A defeat would have been followed by a general rising of the peasantry throughout France, and by the massacre of the nobility. That disaster, at least, was averted by the devastation of Flanders and the complete overthrow of the Flemish militia.

The approach of the French army could not fail to raise the courage of the Leliaerd faction in Ypres. A tumult accordingly ensued, in which the Count's partisans gained the mastery. Communication was then opened with the camp, and in the end Van Arteveld's governor, Peter van den Broucke was delivered over to the French, and a fine of 40,000 francs paid by way of indemnifying in part the costs

of the expedition. The inhabitants of the towns of the Franc, after being cruelly plundered, saved themselves from extermination by paying a fine of 60,000 francs, and by surrendering their respective governors, all of whom were beheaded on the bridge of Ypres. In all these proceedings Louis de Maele was absolutely ignored. His advice was neither asked nor adopted. His own contingent were forbidden to speak Flemish, or to carry the national *scharmsax*, or sharp-pointed iron-bound stave, somewhat similar to the Indian *lathee*. The untranslatable war-cry of his race,—rendered by the French “Flandre au Lion,”—was prohibited, and in its place French and Flemings alike were required to shout “Montjoye! Saint Denis!” The Count submitted in silence. He was gathering the fruit of his own misconduct, though that reflection could have been no consolation.

As for Philip van Arteveld, adversity revealed the noble qualities of the man, and showed that he had inherited from his father something more than a great name. The passage of the Lys at Comines was a great disappointment, and at such a time he could little spare the services of Peter van den Bossche, his most valiant captain. Peter de Wintere had also been compelled to abandon his post at Warneton, but Van Arteveld had reason to expect that Ypres and the Franc would hold out until reinforcements could reach them from Ghent and Oudenaerd. A still greater discouragement was the arrival of envoys from England, requiring his ratification of the agreement that had at last been made with his indiscreet representations, before any succours could be despatched to his

*L. No*

aid. His position, however, was by no means desperate. By avoiding a general action, and confining himself to watching and harassing the enemy, he would have gained time for the arrival of a more potent ally than even the King of England. A northern winter was close at hand. In a few weeks, it might be in a few days, the roads would be impracticable for men-at-arms and wheeled vehicles heavily laden. The ill-drained fields would become a swamp, and every rivulet would swell into a river. So wanton, besides, had been the ravages of the Bretons, that the French must soon have been straitened for provisions, especially since the convoys ordered from Paris had been prevented from starting. By prosecuting the blockade of Oudenaerd, he would have compelled the enemy to attack under great disadvantages, or from Courtrai he might have threatened the flank of the French army, which could not have molested him without again forcing the passage of the Lys in presence of a powerful enemy. But M. de Lettenhove is probably correct in supposing that Van Arteveld was moved by the necessity of protecting Bruges not only from the French, but also from the Leliaerds, who were always formidable in that town. The leaguer before Oudenaerd was therefore maintained, but 20,000 of the best men marched under Van Artevelde to Roosebeke, where he was shortly afterwards joined by some 40,000 militia from Damme, Sluys, and the district known as the Quatre Metiers. His camp was pitched on the brow of a small hill covered with brushwood, at the foot of which ran a brook swollen by the recent heavy rains. The position was

inaccessible to the heavy cavalry of those days, and dismounted knights were incapable of sustained exertion over unfavourable ground. What alone was wanting was the fixed resolve to act solely on the defensive, and guard the road from Ypres to Bruges.

The French army, which had been largely reinforced by the Duke de Berri, halted on the heights of Passchendael. Eight knights, renowned for their prowess, were selected as the personal bodyguard of the King, who was impatient to distinguish himself by some brilliant feat of arms on a field of battle. Messengers were then sent to Philip van Arteveld to offer peace, on condition that he and his associates threw themselves upon the Count's mercy, and engaged to furnish six months' pay to the French soldiers. These terms, however, were without hesitation rejected by the leaders of the Communes, who refused to recognise the authority of the Count until he restored and ratified the privileges accorded by Robert de Béthune after the battle of Courtrai—the day of the Golden Spurs.

The victory at Beverhoutsveld was in part the cause of the defeat at Roosebeke. Van Arteveld and his captains had formed an inflated opinion of their own skill and valour, and foolishly underrated the difference between an ill-armed and undisciplined civic militia and the mail-clad chivalry of France, trained to martial exploits from their boyhood. Froissart is, therefore, justified in deeming it "highly presumptuous in Philip van Arteveld and the Flemings to think of fighting with them." In fact, many of Philip's captains were averse from acting aggressively. They were in favour of standing on the defensive and

waiting for the arrival of their two allies, the English and winter weather. It was all in vain. On the 26th November Van Arteveld entertained his chief officers at a sumptuous banquet, and informed them of his intention to give battle on the morrow. He pointed out to each his particular duty, and exhorted all to acquit themselves as brave soldiers and loyal Flemings. So confident was he of victory, that he had brought with him his wife, Yolande van den Broucke, sister of the unfortunate governor of Ypres, beheaded only a few days previously by command of Charles VI. A great injustice has been done to the memory of this remarkable man by Froissart, who speaks of "a damsel" who had accompanied Philip from Ghent as his paramour. The lady, however, was no "light o' love," but his lawfully wedded wife, and she, unable to sleep from over-excitement, is said about midnight to have stepped out from the tent to cool her heated brow. Looking straight before her, she beheld on the opposite hill the camp fires of the French. Presently she heard, or thought she heard, the war-cries of the enemy, as though they were advancing to attack the Flemish position under cover of the night. Under this impression, she hastily roused her husband, and bid him arm for instant battle for the enemy was close at hand. Listening for a moment at the tent door, he too fancied that he heard the shouts of warriors and the clash of arms. So convinced was he of the reality of those imaginary sounds, that he caused his trumpeter to sound the alarm. His captains, who had noticed the phenomenon sometime previously, hastened to his tent and assured him that they had already



sent out scouts, who reported that all was still in the hostile camp. "Some said," remarks the chronicler, "it was the devils of hell running and dancing about the place where the battle was to be, because of the great prey they expected there."

An alarm of this kind is never construed as a good omen, but as dawn was approaching the Flemings took their arms and fell in at their appointed places, after making a substantial breakfast—for, like the English, they do not affect fighting on an empty stomach. In the front line were placed the men of Ghent, Alost, and Grammont; in the second those of Bruges, Damme, and Sluys; while the militia of the Franc were posted as a reserve a little in the rear. They had stout hearts and strong arms, but their weapons were unsuited for a combat at close quarters with the flower of the French chivalry. Many of them had neither helmet nor cuirass, and still more were armed only with stakes pointed with iron, or with iron-bound cudgels, or with sledge-hammers, though most of them carried a sort of hunting-knife suspended from their girdles. A small body of English archers had found their way from Calais, and might have been eminently useful had the Flemings awaited the enemy. Their costumes were not less varied than their weapons, but that, under the circumstances, was matter of quite secondary importance.

The Count's contingent had kept watch and ward throughout the night. He had the bad taste to be accompanied by his executioner and his sixteen assistants, which seems to have disgusted the French knights. In any case, he was instructed at daybreak



to withdraw his "battle," or division, because, as the Count and his retainers held by the Pope of Rome, it was impossible to fight by the side of heretics. Louis de Maele accepted the insult without a murmur, but many of the Leliaerd knights were greatly pained, and, it is said, secretly warned the Flemings that they were about to be attacked. Such a dense mist, however, covered the country that neither side could tell what was going on in the opposite camp. Three or four knights accordingly volunteered to reconnoitre the Flemish position, and approached so near that they were seen, and taken for the forerunners of the advanced guard. It was then about eight o'clock, and the militia were growing impatient. Van Arteveld was no more self-possessed than his comrades. He forgot his duty as the general, and descended to the level of a mere fighting man. He bade the Flemings to stand shoulder to shoulder, their arms even intertwined, and their *scharmsax* held firmly before them, and by sheer weight of numbers force back and break up the enemy's ranks. To do this, however, it was necessary to leave the entrenchments and abandon the advantages of their splendid position. They had besides to defile along a comparatively narrow road winding through a peat moss, and then to ascend a considerable hill, called the Goudberg or Mont d'Or, on which the Royal army was drawn up in order of battle.

The old chronicler relates how the fog lifted as soon as the oriflamme\* was displayed, and how a

\* The Oriflamme is thus described in an ancient inventory of the treasury of St. Denis, where it was religiously preserved—a copy

white dove wheeled round and round over the King's battalion, and finally alighted on one of his banners. "It was a fine sight to view those banners, helmets, and beautiful emblazoned arms: the army kept a dead silence, not uttering a sound, but eyed the heavy 'battle' of Flemings before them, who were marching in a compact body, with their staves advanced in the air, which looked like spears, and so great were their numbers, they had the appearance of a wood." As the Flemings pressed onward, their archers and crossbowmen galled the French knights, while a certain number of "bombardiers" flung "bombardes," or hand-grenades, which made the horses restive, and occasionally killed their riders. There were also larger pieces of artillery which discharged bars of iron, and several distinguished knights were killed or disabled. The first shock of that mighty host was irresistible. The French vanguard were borne backwards, and with loud shouts the Flemings possessed themselves of the Royal Standard, but it was not the genuine oriflamme, for that never left the Abbey of St. Denis. The wary old Constable, Oliver de Clisson, had foreseen this moment and provided against it. He had extended his two wings, under the respective commands of the Dukes de Berri

alone being exposed to the danger of capture by an enemy :—  
"Etendart d'un cendal fort épais, fendu par le milieu, en forme de gonfalon, fort caduque, enveloppe d'un bâton couvert de cuivre doré, et un fer longuet et aigu au bout."

Oriflamme est une bannière  
Ancien, poi plus forte que guimpe,  
De cendal rougëiant et simple,  
Sans pourtraiture d'autre affaire.—*Guyart.*

and de Bourbon, and had enjoined the knights to send their horses to the rear while they used their long lances as they did at Comines. The manœuvre was completely successful. Those long lances, tipped with heads of Bordeaux steel, impaled the helpless Flemings, ripping up their armour as though it were tinsel. The ironbound *scharmsax* was useless in such an encounter, for the militia was pressed so close together that they could not use their staves as cudgels. Assailed in front and on either flank, they were forced more and more closely upon one another, till the weaker men were stifled and sank unwounded to the ground. It was butchery, not a battle.

The famous Bourcicault here witnessed his first stricken field. He was barely twenty years of age, and slightly built. A burly Fleming, despising his apparent insignificance, told him mockingly to go home to his mother. "Are these," cried Bourcicault, as he buried his dagger in the giant's side, "Are these the children's sports in your country?" Now and again the Flemings, still preserving their serried ranks, would stand at bay, and several knights would bite the dust; but they were again driven back, until they had almost reached the stream at the foot of the hill they had so foolishly quitted. In the wet mud they began to slip and flounder about, and suddenly fell into irreparable disorder. The men-at-arms had battle-axes, which cleft right through the Flemish helmets, and heavy leaden maces which crashed through helmet and skull. Philip van Arteveld had not spared himself that wretched morning. Fighting in the foremost ranks, he had received several wounds, but none very serious. He

now strove to the utmost to rally the fugitives, but his voice had lost its charm. He talked of honour, while they thought only of life. He was borne backward by the throng, and at last was beaten down by the fugitives and trampled under foot in a deep narrow road, overshadowed by the boughs of trees, which wound round the foot of a gravelly hillock, thence named Keyaertsberg, and which leads to Staden and Thorout.

Nine thousand men, says Froissart, were left dead on the field of battle, and for one who died of honourable wounds nine were suffocated. The dead men lay in a heap, one upon the other—all struck down in less than one hour. A body of some 3000 citizens of Ghent made a brief stand on a common covered with brushwood, and hastily threw up entrenchments, but being surrounded and attacked on all sides, they broke and ran, and were terribly cut up. According to the lowest estimate, upwards of 25,000 men fell in battle and the pursuit. No quarter seems to have been given or asked. The young King was taken by his uncles over the field thickly strewn with corpses, and deluged with blood. He demanded the body of Philip van Arteveld. It was believed that he was among the slain, though nothing certain was known at that point. The promise, however, of a reward of one hundred francs caused a close search to be made, and the body of the dead leader was at length discovered in the hollow way, buried beneath a heap of the slain. No fatal or serious wounds were found on his person, and it was judged that he had been smothered to death. After surveying the body for a little while—perhaps with the same feelings that

moved Henry III. to gaze on the giant form of the murdered Duke de Guise—the King commanded that it should be hanged from the bough of a tree, and prohibited the rites of sepulture to the slain, who for many a day furnished an ample feast to beasts and birds of prey. “This battle on Mont d’Or took place the 27th day of November, on the Thursday before Advent, in the year of Grace, 1382; and at that time the King of France was fourteen years of age.”

On the following day the King marched to Courtrai, which was plundered by the Bretons. No mercy was shown to the Flemings concealed in the town, for Charles VI. hoped in that way to avenge the defeat of the French army in 1302. He had also heard that five hundred golden spurs were hung up in the church of Our Lady, and that a festival was held every year in celebration of the Battle of the Spurs. On his return to France, therefore, a few days later, he ordered the town to be committed to the flames, though Louis de Maele went down on his knees to pray him to forego that dreadful resolution. The Duke of Burgundy also interceded in vain, and only succeeded in saving from the universal destruction a clock with a curious piece of mechanism, which he had conveyed to Dijon, but “many knights, squires, men-at-arms, fine children, both girls and boys, were carried away captive, to be ransomed.” At Courtrai the King received with much honour the gallant knight, Sir Daniel d’Halewyn, who had so bravely defended Oudenaerd.

As soon as the rout at Roosebeke was known in the Flemish camp before that town, the leaders

hastily broke up the siege, and retired with the greater part of their men to Ghent, where they were soon afterwards joined by the stout Peter van den Bossche, who, with his wounds still unhealed, inspired something of his own indomitable spirit into the hearts of the trembling citizens. Had the French army marched from Roosebeke straight upon Ghent, the gates would have been thrown open and no resistance offered. The great riches and defenceless condition of Bruges were, however, a temptation not to be overcome, and Charles VI. lost his only chance of gratifying his mad fury amid the smoking ruins of that turbulent city.

At Thorout deputies from Bruges, including two Grey Friars, were introduced into the Royal presence. They had come to sue for mercy and to offer a heavy ransom, and they found powerful intercessors in the Duke of Burgundy, Marshal de Sancerre, the Constable, and many other noble knights who had deigned to accept their gifts of great price. Charles VI., however, was for a time obdurate, and only gave way at last on the citizens engaging to indemnify the Bretons for their disappointment. The sum of 60,000 francs was accordingly paid down at once, and the like amount was agreed to be paid at Candlemas. The inhabitants of Bruges then did homage as liege men, not to their own Count but to the King of France. They consequently swore to renounce all alliances made with the English by James or Philip van Arteveld, and acknowledged Pope Clement VII. to be the supreme pontiff of Christendom. The country around was, nevertheless, cruelly devastated



by the Bretons, Burgundians, and Savoyards, to the number of 1200 spears, who are described as sparing neither rank, age, nor sex. The widow and the orphan, the young man and the maiden, the babe at the breast, and its aged grandsire, were massacred without mercy. Even the Count no longer pleaded for clemency. He surrendered his lands, his towns, and his people, to his sovereign lord, and begged him to do with them according to his will. But Charles VI. had had enough of Flanders, and was eager to return to Paris to punish the rebellion of its citizens. His royal uncle was also anxious to remove him from the frequent scenes of bloodshed and conflagration, which excited him to frenzy, and made of him for the time a raging maniac. He went at first no further than Tournai, where he celebrated Christmas, and that town was compelled to pay the enormous ransom of 1,200,000 crowns, because the inhabitants had refused to accept the Pope of Avignon. The Bretons continued to lay waste the country as the army slowly marched towards the capital, but it is not the province of this little volume to speak of the reduction of Paris, or of the monstrous excesses which marked the restoration of the Royal power.

Louis de Maele walked in the steps of Charles VI., though in his case the plea of madness cannot be urged in extenuation of his wanton barbarity. His executioners had no respite from their labours. The estates of the partisans of the Communes were confiscated entirely, or redeemed only by a ruinous fine. Bartholomew Coolman, Philip van Arteveld's admiral of the fleet, was hanged from a gibbet in sight of the

shipping in Sluys harbour. Great numbers of artisans, though promised an amnesty, preferred to seek their fortune in England. Every town was summoned to surrender its charters, and in almost every instance they were destroyed, together with the treaties made by the Communes either with one another or with Edward III. of England. But the men of Ghent still remained in rebellion. Their three captains, Peter van den Bossche, Peter de Wintere, and Francis Ackerman, inspired them with an invincible determination to defend their rights and privileges. On the 27th January, 1383, Ackerman stormed the fortified town of Ardenburg, expelled the garrison of Bretons and Burgundians, and ran up the banner of Pope Urban VI.

The contention between the Count and his refractory subjects now became a religious war. Urban VI. proclaimed a crusade against the schismatics who supported Clement VII. Henry Spencer, bishop of Norwich, more famous as a warrior than as a theologian, was enjoined to appeal to the people of his diocese to enrol themselves under his banner. A large sum of money was collected for the purposes of this holy war, and towards the end of April the bishop landed at Calais, eager for martial glory. Impatient to commence operations on his own account, he refused to wait any longer for Sir William Beauchamp, the marshal of the projected expedition, and, setting out at the head of 3000 English soldiers, speedily made himself master of Gravelines. Shortly afterwards he received reinforcements, which raised his little army to a considerable force. Near Dunkirk

he encountered the Haze of Flanders, one of Louis' illegitimate offspring, and totally defeated him. The towns of Bergues, Cassel, and Bourbourg then threw open their gates, as did also Saint-Venant, Bailleul Poperinghe, and all the seaboard towns from Furnes to Blankenberghe. Early in June Francis Ackerman, with 20,000 of the Ghent militia, effected a junction with the Bishop, and their united forces marched against Ypres. The garrison of that important frontier town happened just then to be unusually weak in numbers, but it included the valiant knights who had successfully defended Oudenaerd against the communal militia of all Flanders, wielded at will by Philip van Arteveld. The Bishop of Norwich had been led to believe by the men of Ghent that the place would be yielded in three days, instead of which he found himself reduced to the necessity of besieging it in regular form. His movements were further hampered by the arrival of a mob of priests and fanatics from England, who seemed to imagine that the miracle of Jericho would be repeated for their sake, and that the name of Urban VI. would suffice to cast down the walls of Ypres. More useful auxiliaries came from Ghent, under the command of Peter van den Bossche and Peter de Wintere, but at the same time it was reported that Louis de Maele had again stooped to implore aid from the Duke of Burgundy, and that a powerful French army was already on the march. The garrison, however, was reduced to extremities. A party of Bretons, hurrying forward to the relief of the besieged, were surprised and cut to pieces, and the Count is said to have offered to

join the Bishop of Norwich with five hundred lances, provided he would lead his troops into some other country. The proposition was rejected through distrust of Louis' sincerity, and the Bishop adopted the extraordinary measure of excommunicating the garrison as schismatics. For a moment the sentence of interdict filled those good churchmen with dismay, until it was pointed out to them that an appeal lay from the Bishop to Urban VI., whom they also recognised as the only infallible Pontiff.

The quarrel was not to be decided by churchmen. A final and most resolute assault was given early in August, but was repulsed at every point. After which Ackerman and his friends withdrew their contingent to Ghent, while the English slowly retraced their steps to Gravelines. The French army was already on the frontiers, when news arrived at headquarters that, on the 17th September, Francis Ackerman had surprised and carried the fortress of Oudenaerd, which secured for the Ghent people the navigation of the Scheldt. The King's uncles, moreover, were already at strife. Each sought for himself ascendancy in the troubled kingdom. The French army melted away. The Duke of Burgundy alone remained at St. Omer with a small party of knights, negotiating with the English for the surrender of Gravelines. Guided by the impulse of the moment, the Bishop of Norwich suddenly wrote to Richard II. that never would there be a more favourable opportunity for the invasion of France. Equally reckless, the young King galloped at headlong speed from Daventry, in Northamptonshire, to Westminster, where he as quickly renounced his project of

breaking the French power. The Duke of Lancaster, however, seriously applied himself to the task of fitting out an expedition proportioned to the end in view, but on reaching the coast was doomed to view with unavailing disgust the disembarkment of the troops commanded by the Bishop of Norwich, who, disheartened by the non-arrival of the promised succours, had surrendered Gravelines to the enemy.

Louis de Maele now persuaded the King's uncles to authorise him to open negotiations with Richard II., pointing out that, if peace were established between the two kingdoms, the Flemish Communes would be left to their own resources. The plenipotentiaries of France and England accordingly met at Lelighen, near Wissant, through the Count's mediation, but neither treaty nor truce seemed likely to be concluded, because the English insisted that it should be extended likewise to the Flemish Communes. While matters were in this unsatisfactory condition, their aspect was changed by the audacity of the men of Ghent, who crossed the Lys and threatened Lille, while the militia of some other towns advanced towards Calais. At the same time a sympathetic agitation pervaded the commonalty of France, which so alarmed the Duke de Berri that he at once consented to include the county of Flanders within the provisions of the truce. Louis de Maele opposed all concessions to the utmost of his power, until the Duke de Berri harshly remarked: "Cousin, since your imprudence has brought upon you so much shame and misfortune, it is time to renounce your furious projects and to follow wiser

counsels." The Count thereupon withdrew to St. Omer, where he learnt that on the 26th January, 1383, a truce had been concluded to last till the following Michaelmas.

Only three days later Louis de Maele summoned to his presence the most valiant and discreet leaders of his adherents, and when they were gathered round his sick couch, the Duke of Brittany being also present, he took leave of them for ever in kindly and gracious terms, and said: "I make known to all that I,—considering the great honours, goods, and possessions which our Saviour Jesus Christ, of his pure grace, without desert on my part, hath given to me in this world, which I have never used or converted to His service and honour, as I ought to have done, but in vain glory,—commend my poor sinful soul, as humbly as I may, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the blessed Virgin Mary, fountain of mercy, and to all the saints of paradise, whom I humbly supplicate to obtain pardon and remission of my sins, more numerous and greater than I can describe." He then wrote, or dictated, a few lines in which he besought the Duke of Burgundy to govern his people better than he had done, and to repair the breaches made by his misrule. On the morrow he expired, and the old chroniclers affirm that on the night of his death a terrible hurricane swept over the County of Flanders without bending a single tree or doing the slightest damage, and that the bodies hanging from gibbets shook and twisted about, for the demons of hell were hurrying past clutching the soul of the last Count of Flanders. A rumour, perhaps not equally groundless, ascribed his



death to a more material cause than the insulting words addressed to him by the Duke de Berri.\* In those days it was the custom to assign a sudden illness, followed rapidly by death, to poison or the poniard, and too often with good reason. The mortal remains of the unfortunate Count were conveyed to the abbey of Looz, and finally interred with great pomp and state in the church of St. Peter in Lille. The body of the Countess, who had died and been buried a few years previously at Rethel, was laid by his side, and, if often separated in life, they were at last united in death. Nearly all the great lords of Flanders were present at the obsequies of the Count, to whom they had ever been loyal and true.

Modern historians, judging the past by the present, are too fond of accusing the Leliaerd knights of a want of patriotism, forgetting that, in those times, the idea or sentiment of nationality had not been developed. Patriotism, indeed, was incompatible with feudal institutions. A vassal followed his lord to the field, indifferent as to the cause of quarrel or the nationality of the enemy. The only thing to be avoided was to bear arms against a prince or noble to whom the vassal of another lord might owe fealty for an estate or pension. It has been narrated how the Earl of Hainault, in his character of a vassal of the Emperor of the West, served under Edward III. until

\* Mezeray states that the Duke de Berri and the Count of Flanders each claimed Boulogne as his appanage, and that in the course of a hot dispute the Duke, losing his temper, "*jetta sa dague contre le Comte qui mourut trois jours après de sa blessure.*" — "*Hist. de France,*" vol. ii., ch. lii., p. 518.

the army crossed the Scheldt and entered French territory, when he at once went over to Philip de Valois as his liege lord for lands situated within the kingdom of France. Edward III. was his brother-in-law and Philip his uncle, but family ties were no more considered than those of nationality when they clashed with feudal obligations. In those days every civilized country in Europe may be said to have been divided into two nations,—the nobility and the commonalty. Between these there existed no sort of sympathy. The knights and nobles of France sympathised with those of England and Flanders, just as the French and English commonalties were deeply interested in the struggles of their order in Flanders. But in all these countries the nobles in the fourteenth century had learned to fear, as well as despise, the lower orders, who could at least set fire to their proud castles and lordly mansions, however incapable they might yet be of withstanding the shock of mail-clad men-at-arms. And in Flanders, as in Italy, the nobles of the sword were confronted with the nobles of commerce, with the *milites burgenses*, who had the martial qualities of knights while they sprang from and sided with the commons. These men were peculiarly hateful to the feudal lords, whose excesses they repressed with a strong hand, and against whom they so frequently led the civic militia not without honour. But the Lelieaerds were not necessarily nobles. In Bruges especially many of the most opulent burghers favoured the Count, as against their rivals and competitors in Ghent. The minor crafts, again, in all the three good towns were driven by the tyranny of the superior

guilds to look to the Count for protection, and this feeling extended in some measure to all the small towns whose prosperity was hindered by the exclusive privileges and monopolies conferred by particular charters upon Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres. With the death of Louis de Maele a new era may be said to have begun. The Counts of Flanders made way for the Dukes of Burgundy—princes who cared nothing for civic rights and charters, and who favoured commerce as subservient to their luxury, but disliked the Communes as so many hot-beds of insubordination and tumult.

If it be asked how far James and Philip van Arteveld may be regarded as benefactors of their country, the answer must be unsatisfactory. James was undoubtedly a greater statesman than his son. He had formed a policy calculated to benefit his countrymen in the highest degree had they been true to him and to their own interests. The close alliance of Brabant, Hainault, and Flanders, cemented by commercial relations with England, would have made those States thoroughly independent of France, and would have secured their material prosperity. Unfortunately, however, James van Arteveld inscribed, as it were, two lesser circles within this larger one. He wished his native town to be dominant in Flanders, and he further desired that his own, and his forefathers', guild should be dominant in his native town. Upon that sharp rock and in that narrow channel the vessel of his main policy was wrecked.

With regard to Philip van Arteveld it is less easy to summarise. He does not appear to have

possessed any originality, or any very marked individuality. The master mind was Peter van den Bossche, who at a critical moment had the sagacity to divine that Van Arteveld was a good name to conjure with. Peter stood, head and shoulders, above the men of Ghent after Philip's death, as well as during his lifetime, and at all times of difficulty and danger he occupied the foremost position. He was probably not an orator, and was therefore glad to make use of Philip's ready eloquence. At Comines, indeed, he suffered himself to be surprised, but it may be doubted if he would have committed the unpardonable blunder of quitting a practically impregnable position, to grope his way through a dense fog in search of an enemy strongly posted, infinitely better armed and disciplined, and to whom fighting was as the breath of their nostrils. At the same time it will hardly be disputed that Philip van Arteveld was a man of high courage and constancy, who scorned to despair of his countrymen or of himself, and who in the hour of action was intrepid and self-possessed. But, on the other hand, he appears to have been naturally indolent and self-indulgent, and rather speculative than energetic. His father's fate may well have given him a distaste for public life; and if it be true that he was wont to pass much of his time in angling in the two rivers which bathed his native town, it is not fanciful to suppose that his object may have been to escape the notice of his towns-folk, and to pass among them as a careless, easy-going burgher, content to fish for gudgeons while others were battling for monopolies. That he was, however, made of

sterling stuff is apparent from the ease and completeness with which he assumed the part suddenly thrust upon him by Peter van den Bossche. In fine, it must be conceded that both father and son stand out conspicuous in an age that produced many men of masterful minds and virile qualities; but it may still be questioned if Flanders would not have suffered less had neither the one nor the other come to the front. That country might, perchance, have fallen a little short of the surprising commercial wealth, and industrial prosperity, it enjoyed for a few years,—but neither would it have been brought so low, nor would it have undergone such terrible calamities, as contemporary writers have picturesquely chronicled. And it should not be lost sight of, that neither Philip nor his father appears to have understood the importance of raising and strengthening the rural population, the true backbone of every country that is subjected to severe trials. It is, however, somewhat unfair to demand that statesmen of the fourteenth century should have been wise with the experience of the five centuries that separate them from our own times.

## PART VI.



DECLINE AND FALL OF THE COMMUNES.





## PART VI.

### DECLINE AND FALL OF THE COMMUNES.

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#### CHAPTER XIX.

Bruges under Philip the Bold—Ghent—Recovery of Oudenaerd—True meaning of the Battle of Roosebeke—"Les Pourcelets de la Raspaille"—Francis Ackerman—Heroism of the Flemish leaders—Plot against Ghent—Tumult in Bruges—John the Fearless—Philip the Good—Siege of Calais—Philip's attempt upon Bruges—Treachery of the Men of Ghent—Miserable Condition of Bruges—Mournful Festivities.

UNDER the dominion of the Dukes of Burgundy it was in the power of the Flemish Communes to have attained a degree of commercial prosperity hitherto unprecedented in their past history. This splendid opportunity, however, they recklessly flung away with characteristic levity and short-sightedness. Towards the end of April, 1384, Philip the Bold (*le Hardi*), Duke of Burgundy, made a state entry into Bruges, for the purpose of receiving the homage of the municipal magistrates. He was particularly gracious and conciliatory, and appeared sincerely disposed to efface the unpleasant memories of former dissensions between the good towns and his predecessors. At that time, as we learn from the picturesque memoirs of

Philip de Comines, Bruges was an immense emporium of commerce, and the most frequented resort of foreign merchants. More business was probably transacted in that "quaint old Flemish city," than in any other town in Europe. The destruction of such a place, the philosophic chronicler remarks, would have been an irreparable loss, though he seems disposed to look upon Ghent in a very different light. He marvels, indeed, that its very existence had been so long tolerated by the Deity, in view of the evil it had so often caused, and seeing that it was of such little utility to the kingdom, or to the country in which it was situated, and still less to its immediate prince. The citizens of Bruges being more sober-minded, would possibly have been inclined to set an example of orderly obedience to their Count, had they not been so easily led astray by the mischievous counsels of the other good towns, and especially of Ghent. And yet even the Ghent folk are acknowledged by De Comines to have had some good points. Their town, for one thing, was favourably situated at the confluence of two considerable rivers. Then, the citizens, though addicted to pleasure, pomp, and luxury, were good Christians, and served and honoured the Deity in a becoming manner. His wrath, indeed, burnt most fiercely against them because they were unable to cope in subtilty with Louis XI. He laughs to scorn their clumsy, blundering attempts at diplomacy, and says, truly enough, that they had no experience of the management of great public affairs. He admits that they always began by being well disposed to their Counts, especially while these were minors, but

they could brook no contradiction, and thought only of what was immediately good for themselves. In short, the deputies who waited upon the French King at that time "n'étaient que bestes et gens de ville la plus part."

The new Count was destined to have an early opportunity of testing the impracticable character of the townsmen of Ghent. In the temporary absence of Francis Ackerman—the Atremen, or Aterman of Froissart and his copyists—the important fortress of Oudenaerd was surprised by the Sire d'Escornay, and when deputies from Ghent pointed out to Philip that such an outrage was a violation of the existing truce, he curtly replied that he was not answerable for the martial enterprises of individual knights. It was, indeed, impossible that a Seigneur should long submit to the exigencies of a truce between himself and his vassals. Such an engagement was an admission of their right to take up arms against their lord and resist his authority. Oudenaerd was clearly a fief of the County of Flanders, and had been forcibly captured and retained by the men of Ghent, contrary to the laws and usages of feudalism. During the continuance of an arrangement which recognised the possession of Oudenaerd by the citizens of Ghent, Philip was clearly debarred from marching against the place in person, but, in view of the confusion and lawlessness that still prevailed in France and Flanders, he may be pardoned for conniving at acts of violence which tended to restore his own authority and to diminish the influence of the Communes. It must not be forgotten that the affair at Roosebeke was not

merely the outcome of a contest between a somewhat capricious and arbitrary Seigneur and his refractory vassals. Upon the fate of that battle had depended the very existence of the French monarchy, and the continuance of the feudal system in opposition to the French and Flemish Communes. These latter institutions may not have been republican in the beginning, but their tendency was throughout towards republicanism. They bore with the lordship of their Count and the over-lordship of the King of France, because they were more jealous of one another than they were of their seigneur and suzerain, and because this jealousy prevented them from putting forth their united strength to cast off a yoke which restrained the freedom of their commercial relations. But whenever victory, no matter in how fugitive a fashion, crowned the arms of either the Ghent or the Bruges militia, both France and Italy were for a time stirred from their lowest depths, and the principle of democracy seemed on the point of a signal and disastrous triumph. Had James van Arteveld been allowed more time in Flanders, had Rienzi been spared a little longer in Rome, democracy might have emerged from its normal chaotic condition, though only to develop into an oligarchy as the transition to monarchical power. But, as it happened, the successes of the Communes were written in blood, which could only be effaced by their own. Their own inconstancy was their worst enemy. They were never true to themselves. While the slightest affront to their selfish monopolies and mischievous privileges sufficed to throw them into the wildest state of agitation, when they ran a-mok

against all who strove to moderate and guide their frenzy, they were at once quieted by a few plausible promises from their Count, and quietly looked on while their late leaders were banished, or tortured and beheaded.

The recovery of Oudenaerd by a vassal of Philip Duke of Burgundy, now Count of Flanders, excited the citizens of Ghent to such a degree, that nothing would satisfy them but recourse to arms. A Burgundian knight, the Sire de Jumont, who had quite recently been appointed Grand Bailiff of Flanders, is described by Froissart as increasing their exasperation, by his excessive severity towards prisoners taken with arms in their hands. He would accept no ransom, and if he did not straightway put them to death, he would deprive them of eyesight, or cut off their hands, ears, or feet, "*et puis les laissoit aler en cel état pour exemplier les autres.*" These cruelties brought about terrible reprisals. The thickets of La Raspaille, between Renaix and Grammont, swarmed with peasants driven from their homes, who massacred the Burgundians without pity, whenever they came upon them singly or in small detachments. These "*franc-tireurs,*" as they would now be called, were held in contempt by the Burgundian knights, who spoke of them as "*les pourcelets (porkers) de la Raspaille,*" but who nevertheless suffered fearfully from their despair. But Philip's ambition soared far beyond the woods of La Raspaille and the blood-stained streets of Ghent. He aimed at the supreme direction of the kingdom of France, and at the invasion, if not the conquest, of England. To carry out this double project,



he strengthened his own position by marrying his daughter Margaret to William of Bavaria, heir to the county of Hainault, and by accepting for his eldest son, John de Nevers, the hand of Margaret of Bavaria, while, a few months later, he persuaded Charles VI. to espouse another daughter of the Duke of Bavaria.

Heedless of the manœuvres and intrigues of this "haute politique," Francis Ackerman dreamed of recalling the days of James van Arteveld. He renewed the alliance with England, and received a welcome supply of provisions, together with a reinforcement of a thousand English archers and a handful of men-at-arms, but he soon learned to his cost that Richard II. had not inherited the martial character of his grandfather. It does not, however, enter into the province of these supplementary chapters to recount the varying incidents of the desultory warfare which ensued. Francis Ackerman acquitted himself alike as a daring partizan and a skilful general, and for awhile made head against the superior discipline and numbers of the Franco-Burgundian armies, assisted by the militia of Bruges and other Flemish towns, more careful of their own safety than emulous to imitate the spasmodic heroism of their fellow-countrymen in Ghent. But it was easier to devastate the country than to conquer its inhabitants. Sixteen men of Ghent, barricaded in the church-tower at Arteveld, held at bay the entire army of Charles VI. until the walls were demolished by engines of war. The highest order of courage and self-devotion was, moreover, manifested by the

wealthiest burghers and land-owners of the Pays de Waes. That fertile district had been barbarously wasted by the French troops, who even fired the woods to which the women and children had fled for refuge from their brutality. A considerable number of prisoners whose easy circumstances seemed to promise a generous ransom, were brought to the camp of Charles VI., but were immediately ordered out to execution by the King's uncles. At last, there remained only twenty-four, all kinsmen one of the other, and all of good family and great local influence. Some of the French knights interceded on their behalf, and their lives would have been spared had they exhibited any signs of yielding. Not one of them would purchase life by a meanness. Their senior said with a firm voice that, although the power of the King might prevail over the resistance of brave men, he could not make them change their opinions. Even, he continued, if the King were to put to death every Fleming then alive, their dry bones would rise up again to combat him. He and his gallant comrades perished, one after the other, without a murmur, without the movement of a muscle. With unflinching eyes and unaltered brow they met death calmly and serenely, as it behoves free men ever to do. They died not in vain, for their heroic demeanour, while it inspired the French knights with admiration, filled the heart of the King with terror, and a few days later Charles VI. and his army returned to France.

By the truly patriotic exertions of three citizens of Ghent, ultimately supported by Francis Ackerman, a

treaty of peace was concluded at Tournai on the 18th December, 1385, which secured the privileges of that opulent city, and also those of its allied towns, and pledged the Duke's favour to all law-abiding subjects. On their part the Ghent burghers renounced the English alliance, repudiated their homage to the King of England, and engaged themselves for ever to render due obedience to the King of France, and to the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, so long as their privileges and franchises remained untouched. Peter van den Bossche, however, distrusted Philip, and took refuge in England, in company of the archers and men-at-arms commanded by John Bouchier.

In the following year vast preparations were made for the invasion of England. A large army and an immense fleet were collected at Sluys, and had the King's uncles acted in unison much mischief might have been wrought in the eastern counties, against which the expedition was particularly directed. Fortunately the Duke de Berri loitered on the way till the season was too far advanced for maritime operations, and the mighty host melted away. The Duke of Burgundy was for awhile furious at being baulked of his revenge, for he had never forgotten or forgiven his imprisonment in England. But he suddenly recovered his composure. The Duke de Berri had pointed out to him a surer and safer gratification. Charles VI. gave out that, in token of his kindly feelings towards the citizens of Ghent, he intended to celebrate the Christmas festival in that town. He was preceded by a long train of waggons loaded, appa-

rently, with casks of wine, in charge of 800 servants and drivers. Suspicions were excited. The wooden horse was once more being led into Troy. A burgher, more audacious than his fellows, struck one of the casks, and stoutly averred that its contents were not liquid. His fellow-townsmen gathered around, mastered all opposition, and broke open the casks, which were filled with weapons. The King's servants were publicly beheaded, after confessing that they had been charged to open the gates to the royal troops, and that it was intended to destroy the town and massacre the inhabitants. The conduct of the irregular levies from Picardy seemed to confirm this strange tale. They pillaged the town of Sluys, outraged wives and maidens, and attempted to act after the same manner in Bruges, but the townsfolk took to their arms, struck down the Duke de Berri, and chased the French knights to their lodgings. It seemed as if the "Bruges Matins" were about to be repeated, and Froissart acknowledges that, had not the Sire de Ghistelles interposed his powerful local influence, not a French knight or squire would have escaped death.

Under John, nicknamed, rather than surnamed, the Fearless, the Flemish Communes recovered a large portion of their ancient influence. The nobility and clergy thought it no shame to sit in council with the Communal magistrates, under the title of the "States of Flanders." To secure their personal safety they caused the fortifications of Ghent, for it was in that town they held their meetings, to be greatly strengthened, and in times of trouble they made their voice

to be heard and respected even in Paris. But their influence was, after all, factitious. During the frightful anarchy which marked the internecine strife of the Burgundians and Armagnacs, there was no supreme constituted authority to inspire either terror or confidence. Those who were able to do so protected themselves—the defenceless were pillaged alike by friend and foe. Had a James van Arteveld appeared at this juncture, the independence and union of Flanders might have been attained without bloodshed; but no one arose to serve as a cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night, and the opportunity was lost for ever.

John *sans Peur*, though certainly not *sans Reproche*, was succeeded by his son Philip, miscalled the Good. The most extravagant magnificence prevailed at the Court of Duke Philip. Mediæval pageantries, jousts, and knight errantry, flickered their last feeble flame before they finally expired. At times the Flemish Communes were in profound repose, and enjoyed material prosperity to a demoralizing extent. At other times, however, they cried havoc! and let loose the dogs of civil war. Now it was Bruges that raised its standard against that of the Duke, and clamoured for privileges which it invariably abused. Now it was Ghent that, for sheer jealousy, turned upon its sister town, or with loud uproar and some bloodshed demanded the immediate redress of apocryphal grievances. Things were in much the same state as in Northern France in the twelfth century, when a contemporary writer complained, in his barbarous Latin,

Discordant omnes, praesul, comes, atque phalanges,  
Pugnant inter se concives, contribulesque,  
Urbica turba strepit, machinantur et oppida bellum.

In the beginning of his reign, Philip the Good was too much occupied with the affairs of France to pay much attention to the wants and wishes of his Flemish subjects. It was in 1436 that he first thought of utilising them in the great work of expelling the English from that kingdom. With some trouble, and by the exhibition of much tact and forbearance, he at length prevailed upon the Communes to place at his disposal a considerable force of their militia for the purpose of besieging Calais. The English garrison, however, offered a determined resistance, and was revictualled and reinforced, while the Burgundian Admiral, John de Hornes, did not venture to put out from the Zwyn. Discouraged by frequent reverses, the militia suddenly raised the fatal cry of treachery. Striking their tents, and loading their waggons, they started off for Flanders during the night, shouting to one another, "*Go, go, wy syn al veraden!*"—let us be off, let us be off! we are all betrayed! The Duke followed them to Gravelines, but his entreaties and promises were alike disregarded, and he became painfully aware of the danger of placing reliance upon such wayward and inconstant supporters.

In the following year a serious disturbance occurred at Ghent, and two influential citizens were put to death. Tranquillity, however, was soon restored, but the evil spirit of sedition reappeared only three days later, though this time at Bruges, where both the burgomaster and his brother were cruelly murdered.



A deputation was promptly despatched to Arras, to solicit forgiveness from the Duke, who carelessly replied that matters of moment required his immediate presence in Holland. Under this pretence he collected a considerable army, and marched at the head of his troops to Roulers. Thence he wrote to the magistrates of Bruges that he proposed to pass through their town, but with a very limited number of followers, and that not a single common soldier should be suffered to enter within their walls. In the afternoon of the 23rd May, Philip stopped at the village of St. Michael, but his army continued to advance, and halted only at the Bouverie Gate. Thereupon the chief magistrates hastened to St. Michael's, and insisted that the Duke should fulfil his engagements. Equivocal answers were all they could obtain, until tidings came that the gate was in possession of the Burgundians, when Philip exclaimed, "I will not separate from my men-at-arms," and turning to his knights and officers, he added, "This is the Holland I mean to subdue." Refusing to listen to the clergy, who boldly protested against the infamy of delivering up to his soldiery such a town as Bruges, Philip rode a little way beyond the gate, but the populace looked so threatening that he slowly retreated to the Friday market-place—the site of the present railway station. His archers were commanded to sweep the streets, and their arrows pierced the women at the windows, and the old people and children at a distance. The Duke, drawing his sword, so far forgot himself as to cut down a citizen who was standing quietly by his side. An immense tumult arose. The tocsin rang

out furiously. Armed men came running to the spot from all quarters. The archers were struck down and trampled under foot. The light-armed pillagers fled to the city gate, and regained the country. The people then closed in upon the men-at-arms with pike and knife. Many were unhorsed, and speedily despatched. The Duke himself was in imminent danger. In vain the burgomaster, Louis van de Walle, called upon the citizens to respect their Seigneur. They were maddened by Philip's duplicity, by the uproar and the bloodshed, and would listen to no remonstrances. With the aid of a journeyman blacksmith, the burgomaster burst open the nearest city gate, and Philip escaped to Roulers, while Louis van de Walle lived to repent of his devoted loyalty.

The Bruges militia, confiding in the dispersion of the Duke's army, surprised Ardenburg, and carried off a rich and welcome booty in corn and wine. They next proceeded to attack Sluys, though held by a stout garrison, and had already effected a breach, when deputies arrived from Ghent, and entreated them to stay their hand, as the Duke was willing to concede all that they could reasonably desire. With characteristic fatuity the militia immediately returned to Bruges, and, as they withdrew, the Burgundians sallied forth and pillaged all the surrounding villages and hamlets, until one of their bravest captains was defeated under the walls of Bruges by an inferior force, and narrowly escaped with his life.

This success emboldened the men of Ghent to venture forth beyond their walls. They even advanced

as far as Mariakerke, and summoned to their camp the militia of their military circle.\* But while awaiting the arrival of these reinforcements they were joined by one Rasse Onredene, who was secretly in the service of the Duke, but who so worked upon the silly burghers that they elected him their Captain. He then easily persuaded them that their wisest course was to avoid violence, and to offer their mediation. Delegates from Bruges hastened to join the proposed conference at Eecloo, and were astonished at finding the Ghent army prepared to compel their acceptance of the Duke's terms. For awhile they refused all submission, but an epidemic suddenly broke out and carried off upwards of 20,000 victims. A great scarcity of food ensued upon a winter of extreme rigour, and an attack of leprosy was added to their other miseries. Peace was now demanded on all sides. Deputies were sent to Arras to pray for pardon, and were kept for three months in horrible suspense. At length the Duke was pleased to spare the town, but imposed the most humiliating and revolting conditions. Not a few of the wealthy burghers left their homes, under pretext of making pilgrimages to distant shrines, but even this means of escape was speedily cut off, as the penalty of death was pronounced against all pilgrims from that town. The executioners had enough to do just then. Even women of good social position were subjected to torture, and among them was the wife of the burgo-master who had saved Philip's life. His son was one

\* See p. 175.

of those who were beheaded, and he himself and his tortured wife had already ascended the scaffold, when a joyful peal of bells announced the arrival of the Duchess. The further effusion of innocent blood was stopped, and Louis van de Walle and his wife were sentenced to imprisonment for life in the château of Wynendael.

Chiefly through the remonstrances of the foreign merchants, commercial relations were at length restored between Flanders and England, and by degrees industry revived. In December, 1440, Philip consented once more to visit his "good town" of Bruges, and was welcomed with the most fulsome and abject demonstrations of submission. Scriptural pageants and devices represented the Duke as the Saviour of his people. Tournaments were held, minstrels paraded the streets singing the praises of the Duke, as though he were the Deity incarnate, stately banquets were offered by the magistrates, lengthened, if not enlivened, by the ponderous conceits which still survived in Flanders, the darkness of the coming night was made resplendent with thousands of torches, and the church-bells rang their loudest and most musical peals. The lesson, however, was not forgotten. "Remember Bruges!" said Philip to the citizens of Ypres, when they at one time seemed on the point of a tumult. They did remember, and there was peace in the land for ten years. Industry and commerce made rapid strides. The arts began to be understood and admired. Literature was esteemed, but luxury was never more rampant. For corruption was preceding death, and the funeral baked meats had already

been served up in Bruges. And it was the treachery of the men of Ghent that had hastened this decay. We shall presently see how their children's teeth were set on edge, because of the sour grapes their fathers had eaten.

## CHAPTER XX.

Disputes between Philip and the town of Ghent—Insurrection—Death of the Bastard of Burgundy—Battle of Gavre—Treaty of Gavre—Charles the Rash at Ghent—Mary of Burgundy—Maximilian of Austria—Philip the Fair—Charles Quint—Confiscation of the liberties of Ghent—Conclusion.

For a time the power and riches of Ghent were aggrandized by the obscuration of Bruges. It became the chief city in all Flanders, and consequently an object of jealousy to the Duke, who removed the sessions of the Grand Council to Ypres, and shortly afterwards to Dendermonde. The Bruges people had for some years past submitted to the *gabelle*, or duty upon salt, and in 1447 Philip attempted to impose it upon the citizens of Ghent, promising various concessions in return for this subvention, but his application was promptly and energetically refused, and, as a mark of his resentment, for the three following years he absented himself entirely from that town. The inhabitants desired nothing better, and would have been quite contented to be abandoned to their own devices for ever. That was precisely what the Duke had no intention of doing. He first tried, though unsuccessfully, to influence the municipal elections, and when foiled in that effort, he refused to recognise Daniel Sersanders as one of the



*échevins*, on the ground that he was one of those who had opposed the tax upon salt. The States of Flanders then proffered their mediation, and the Ghent burghers finally consented to cancel the previous election and to choose another set of magistrates. Encouraged by their yielding on this point, the Duke made further demands, which were rejected as being contrary to their rights and privileges. He even went so far as to summon to his presence the magistrates whose election had been annulled, and declared that he would never enter the town so long as there was any chance of encountering Daniel Sersanders, Liévin Potter, or Liéven Sneevoet. These three citizens forthwith resolved to sacrifice themselves for their fellow-townsfolk, and proceeded, under protest, to place themselves at the Duke's disposal. Untouched by their self-abnegation, he compelled them to appear before him in the attitude of supplicants, bareheaded and barefooted, and sentenced all three to banishment from Flanders for periods varying from ten to twenty years. They were then escorted to the frontier, and there turned adrift upon the world.

When it was known in Ghent that the Duke had thus violated their privileges, the people gathered together in the market-places, and implored Heaven to send them another James van Arteveld. Two Burgundian agents, Peter Tincke and Louis Dhamere, endeavoured to direct this agitation in such a manner as should favour the revival of the Ducal influence, but they only succeeded in creating a wild disturbance and in bringing their own heads to the block. The Duke's officers were at the same time constrained to

leave the town, and the magistrates let it be clearly understood that it might become their duty to appeal to Charles VII., whose enmity towards Philip was of long standing. The banished *échevins* were straightway recalled from exile, and were entreated to use their utmost efforts to restore tranquillity. But matters had gone too far to leave the door open to persuasion. The populace had gained the upper hand, and had chosen as their leaders three men totally unworthy of their confidence. A fruitless expedition against Biervliet drove them to cover their incompetence by acts of violence and bloodshed. The more moderate and respectable citizens vainly struggled against the surging waves of anarchy, and sought to effect a reconciliation with their liege lord.

So long as military operations were prevented by the winter season Philip temporised, and affected to lend a willing ear to their representations, which were warmly supported by the States and by the Count de St. Pol. But on the 15th March, 1452, the mask was dropped, and war was formally declared against the good town of Ghent. Imprisonment in irons was to be the punishment of those who supplied the rebels with corn. The bravest captains, and among them were the three Lalaings, were appointed to the chief commands. The other Communes, with the noble exception of the comparatively weak and exposed town of Ninove, declared themselves against their fellow countrymen and espoused the Burgundian cause. The Bruges citizens, indeed, were so far excusable that their own ruin was the handiwork of their Ghent rivals, but they might have taken a

nobler revenge by wiping out the past and striking one more blow for the independence of Flanders. Had they boldly pronounced in favour of Ghent, not one Flemish Commune would have stood aloof. United, they might have braved and baffled the utmost might of Burgundy, Brabant, and Hainault, nor would Philip have ventured all upon such a perilous cast. But, as it has been so often remarked, the ideas of nationality and patriotism were not as yet understood by the traders and artizans of Flanders. Each Commune thought only of its own particular interests, and took its separate course without regard to the fate of its neighbours. The result of such selfish shortsightedness may be briefly set forth.

In Ghent itself the citizens began by squabbling with one another. Some were beheaded, others were banished, others, again, fled from a city that knew neither how to make war, nor how to live in peace. A few half-hearted negotiations having failed, the tocsin was rung out from the belfry, a *wapeninghe*—or armament—was proclaimed, and some 20,000 armed men, with a fine park of artillery, took the road to Oudenærd. But that important post was held by Simon de Lalaing, whose renowned nephew, James de Lalaing, performed prodigies of valour to be the first to succour his almost equally redoubtable uncle. The militia of Ghent fought with desperate courage, but without discipline or concerted purpose, and more than once, when at the very point of victory, they fell into disorder, and were ruthlessly massacred by the heavy-armed Burgundians, supported by the militia of the other Flemish Communes. The struggle was long

and splendidly sustained. The men of Ghent were desperate. Their own lives and all that was dear to them were at stake, and they fell in their close ranks, without yielding an inch of ground. It was all in vain. Philip's captains hemmed them in on all sides. There was no hope of succour, though at one time Henry VI. promised to send 7000 men to their assistance. Charles VII. also interposed his good offices, but without enforcing his mediation by the approach of an army. The death of James de Lalaing was regretted even by his enemies, but Philip was carried beyond his usual accesses of ungovernable fury when he heard that his favourite illegitimate son, Corneille, Bastard of Burgundy, had fallen on the well-stricken field of Rupelmonde. In his first outburst of grief he hanged from a tree Walter Leenknecht, the leader of the Ghent militia, already grievously wounded, nor did he find much greater consolation in the magnificent obsequies celebrated by the Duchess, forgetful of her own wrongs. The dead body was laid in the tomb sacred to the allied Houses of Brabant and Burgundy, and with it were interred his banner, his standard, and his pennon, as was usual with knights who died sword in hand.

For a brief space a truce was concluded, but it was only a breathing time, during which both parties prepared for the last and conclusive struggle. The kings of France and England were alike too much occupied with their own affairs to do more than offer useless counsels. Unhappily for themselves, the Ghent militia had learnt nothing from the terrible experience of past reverses and defeats. They were always

ready to force the fighting, but took no thought about protecting their flanks or covering their retreat. They fought on stolidly and stupidly, shoulder to shoulder, but without developing the most rudimentary strategy, and seemingly only anxious to slay and be slain. In that respect they they were amply gratified at Gavre. It is said that they were betrayed by an Englishman, named John Fox, who commanded a small body of archers. This miscreant led their army straight to the Burgundian camp, when he galloped over to the enemy. For all that, the battle was for some time doubtful. The position of the Ghent militia was defective at every point, and they were destitute of cavalry, though they possessed a formidable artillery. But their powder barrels blew up early in the day, and fatal disorder ensued. They were, besides, formed in three large divisions so badly handled that they gave no support to one another. At one moment Philip himself was surrounded and in great danger, from which he was rescued by his son, the Count de Charolais, afterwards Charles the Rash. In the end, however, 20,000 citizens of Ghent were either slain in fair fight or drowned in the Scheldt, and so piteous was the spectacle of the scene of slaughter that even Philip exclaimed, "Whoever may be the victor my loss is great, for it is my people who have perished." Nevertheless, he desired to push forward and finish the war at a blow. But no one knew the road across the marshes, and through the woods, which at that time stretched between Gavre and Ghent. Just then a peasant came up, and was commanded, at the peril of his life, to lead the army by the straightest road to

the foot of the walls. He placed himself at the head of the advanced guard, and, by a circuitous route, conducted it to the camp from which it had originally started. "How is this?" cried Philip; "I ordered you to guide me straight to Ghent, and you have brought me back to my own quarters." The guide, however, had disappeared in the thickening shades, and the city was spared the horrors of a storm and sack by night.

Among the slain were eight magistrates and two hundred monks in their sad-coloured garments. Early next day, however, the ramparts were manned by the citizens, resolved to die at their posts, when a herald came in sight and proposed a suspension of hostilities. A few of the burghers still insisted on fighting on to the bitter end; but wiser counsels ultimately prevailed, and on the morrow, July 23rd, 1453, was concluded the Treaty of Gavre. The terms accorded to the insurgents were severe, but not more so than they must fairly have expected. The municipal magistrates were naturally shorn of much of their local influence, the white hoods were suppressed and prohibited, the banners of the guilds were surrendered and deposited, some in the church of Notre Dame at Halle, and some in the church of Notre Dame at Boulogne; a heavy fine was imposed, and the magistrates, accompanied by 2000 burghers, were required to meet the Duke half a league from the town, bareheaded and barefooted, and with other tokens of humility, and there on their bended knees and in the French language to confess their delinquencies and pray for mercy. On the other hand, their



most useful privileges were reserved to them, personal liberty was assured to all, the salt tax was remitted, and the fine was afterwards considerably diminished. Finally, Peter Baudins, whose double-dealing had excited the citizens against the Duke, and the Duke against the citizens, was closely imprisoned in the castle of Rupelmonde. On the 30th July, Philip rode at the head of his army to Ledeberg, situated a short distance from the St. Liévin Gate, and was there met by the magistrates and burghers of Ghent in abject attire and suppliant attitude. In answer to their appeal for mercy, Duke Philip replied: "Be to us henceforth good subjects—we will be to you a good and loyal lord."\* He did not, however, enter the city, but turned his charger's head and took the road to Oudenaerd.

Philip had no further trouble with the Communes of Flanders. He had crushed the spirit, as well as the power, of the citizens of Bruges and of those of Ghent. There was nothing to fear from that generation, but the boys of 1453 had become strong men in 1467, the year of his death, and had ceased to remember the terrors of their childhood. It was reserved for his son, Charles the Rash, to discover that the scotch'd snake had still strength to bite. After solemnizing with great pomp his father's obsequies at Bruges, the young Duke proceeded to Ghent to receive from his subjects their oath of allegiance. At first he was welcomed with respect, if not with much rejoicing, but no sooner had he entered the Friday market than he was

\* "*Soyez-nous doresnavant bons sujets, nous vous serons bon et loyal seigneur.*"

petitioned by the principal burghers, on their knees, to restore the ancient rights and privileges of the Commune. In reply, and probably to gain time, he desired them to make their wishes known in writing, and promised to give an answer in three days. But in the interval a terrible commotion was raised by the dregs of the populace, and in the end almost the entire population was carried away by the vehemence of their improvised leaders. Charles was at one time in danger of his life, and, through his own rashness, would certainly have been massacred but for the courage and popularity of the Sire de la Gruuthuse. The presence of his little daughter Mary, however, constrained him to control his fury, and on the following day he virtually cancelled the most objectionable articles of the Treaty of Gavre. That he would have fulfilled these engagements had his hands been free is at least problematical, but his brief reign was too fully occupied with his disputes with Louis XI. and the Swiss Cantons to allow any leisure for the punishment of Ghent.

During the whole course of their tumultuous career the inhabitants of Ghent never appeared in a worse light than through their treatment of Mary of Burgundy. They took the most cruel advantage of her youth, innocence, and natural timidity. They seemed to derive a thoroughly savage gratification from working upon her fears for her own safety, and for that of her attached friends and faithful counsellors. They put to death under the most revolting circumstances her devoted adherents, Guy d'Humbercourt, John de Melle, and the Chancellor Hugonet. They struck off

the heads of several notable citizens on frivolous pretexts. They extorted from the Princess the formal renunciation of the Treaty of Gavre, and of all imposts levied since the year 1450, and compelled her to swear to the maintenance of all charters, franchises, and privileges enjoyed by the Commune previous to that date. The same coarse selfishness and barbarity were displayed at Bruges. Though clamorous for their own licentious independence, the citizens of that town gave themselves no rest until they had constrained their hapless Princess to suppress the fourth "member," and again subject the Franc to the jurisdiction of Bruges. On the day of her betrothal to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria a new charter was promulgated, confirming and enlarging the most favourable concessions of former times, and practically recognising the pretensions to self-government so often put forward by that inconstant and restless Commune. She was suffered, indeed, by the population of both Bruges and Ghent to marry the husband of her choice, but her brief wedded life was embittered by their rancorous jealousies and low-born arrogance.

Maximilian's personal experiences after the death of his ill-fated Consort were of the most poignant and humiliating character. He was incessantly embroiled in hostilities against his own subjects. At Bruges he was imprisoned for some days in the Craenenburg, the largest house overlooking the Grande Place, and which remains to the present day, a melancholy memorial of the former greatness of that decayed city. Many of his personal friends and adherents were executed almost under his very eyes, and when he

was subsequently removed to a more stately mansion between St. James' Church and the Ezel-brugge, executions were still more frequent. The fear of the speedy approach of a German army at length wrought his deliverance; but even then the short-sighted populace, instead of setting him unconditionally at liberty, and trusting to his generosity for their forgiveness, wrung from his necessities all manner of stipulations which he was not, in the least, likely to respect on escaping from duress. On both sides much duplicity and an insatiable vindictiveness were exhibited, by which the country was brought to the verge of ruin. Maximilian himself was unstable as water. He was of a kindly, indolent disposition, and in an humbler sphere of life might have passed through a harmless and irreproachable existence. His personal bravery was beyond all doubt, but it was the animal courage of a common soldier. Through his own skill he never gained a victory, and if perchance a battle was won without his aid as a general he knew not what to do with his unexpected good fortune. As *mainbourg*, or Regent, of Flanders, he was never in harmony with the Communes, and his military operations were conducted as in an enemy's country, and it must be acknowledged that the resentment he bore towards the Flemings was not without cause.

His son Philip the Fair was proclaimed Count of Flanders on the 26th December, 1494. He had shortly before completed the sixteenth year of his age, and two years later he married Joan of Aragon. From this union proceeded great issues, which changed the political aspect of Europe. On the 24th

February, 1500, was born in Ghent a prince, who became known in the fulness of time as Charles-Quint, for a while the most powerful monarch the world had seen since the days of Charlemagne. At the death of Isabella, of Castile, her crown descended to the youthful Count of Flanders, who enjoyed this new honour for less than two years. His death occurred at Bruges on the 25th September, 1506, and the Emperor Maximilian was declared guardian of his grandson, Charles, Prince of Castile, and heir to all the States that had nominally paid allegiance to Mary of Burgundy. At the age of nineteen, Charles, now King of Aragon and Castile, was elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and by virtue of his being the fourth Emperor since the death of Charlemagne who bore the name of Charles, he assumed the title of Charles-Quint.

It does not, however, lie within the scope of this little work to trace, even in outline, the history of that remarkable monarch. The Communes of Flanders had ceased to exercise any appreciable influence on the politics of Europe. What was more to be regretted, was the decay of Flemish industry. The gradual, but rapid, silting up of the Zwyn had deprived Bruges of its importance as a maritime port. Its traffic had passed to Antwerp. Foreign merchants, with the exception of a few Spaniards, removed from a town that had lost its commercial advantages. Agriculture was in so elementary a condition that the soil of Flanders was pronounced too sterile, and the climate too cold, to produce cereal crops, and, consequently, wheat, as well as wine, was imported from France.

But when the great rivalry commenced between Charles-Quint and Francis I., the Flemish Communes were reduced to sore straits. They could neither dispose of their manufactures and merchandize, nor procure the necessaries of life for their own consumption. Spanish wool now supplanted wool from England, but there was no corresponding demand for the produce of the Flemish looms. Ghent, however, had to a certain extent profited by the misfortunes of its rival. It was the largest, the richest, and the most densely peopled city in Europe. It covered a larger area even than Paris, a statement confirmed by the *bon mot*, attributed to Charles-Quint, who once facetiously remarked: "*Je mettrais tout Paris dans mon Gand (gant).*" Unhappily for themselves the Ghent burghers never understood the virtues of patience and forbearance. They were in a state of chronic feverishness as to their franchises. In the time of Charles-Quint the citizens were accused of being as unfaithful to their God as to their seigneur. They were prone to heresy and schism as well as to tumult and strife. They had, moreover, grown dissolute and corrupt, and were eager to acquire wealth by other means than honest industry. A sect arose, called the *Creasers*, who aimed at making Ghent a free and independent city, owing allegiance to neither King nor Kaiser. Their ambition was unimpeachable, but they sought to gratify it through the aid of Francis I. To emancipate themselves from the German yoke, they proposed to acknowledge the King of France as their liege lord. At that moment—1538-39—Francis I. was in no condition to break with Charles-Quint, and



accordingly declined the overtures of the good towns of Flanders.

The *poorters* and the craftsmen were divided on this point. The former were content to rest and be thankful—the latter desired nothing so much as a change. An insurrection was on the point of breaking out—the *Creesers* relying on the immediate sympathy of the German Protestants, and on the ultimate assistance of the French monarch. But Francis I. was just then affected by one of his chivalrous fits of generosity, and in that mood invited Charles-Quint to pass through France as the most direct route from Spain to Flanders. In this way, the Emperor was enabled to make his entry into Ghent before the insurgents had made any preparations for resistance. The streets and open spaces were promptly occupied by his troops, and the citizens awaited their fate with dismal forebodings. The first measures were severe. Three of the most influential citizens were executed in front of the Gravesteen, while a considerable number of scarcely less note were fined or banished. The next step was to raise a citadel on the site of the church and monastery of St. Bavon, which should be as a curb in the mouths of the Ghent men for all future time—though no fortifications of any kind now remain to provoke an attack which they could not repel. The charters, franchises, privileges, and particular jurisdiction of the Commune were then declared forfeited for ever. The houses, chattels, revenues, guns, and munitions of war belonging to the Corporation were seized, and even the bell *Roelandt* was confiscated. A heavy fine was further imposed,

and the municipal magistrates, the *dekenen* of guilds, representatives of the different crafts, and fifty of the *Creesers*, were compelled to appear before the Emperor in penitential garb, and, with humble voice, to implore his mercy. The number of trade-guilds was reduced to twenty-one. The *dekenen*, for the future, were to be burghers retired from business. The procession of the precious casket containing the sacred relics of St. Liévin, which had so often preluded scenes of strife and uproar, was prohibited, as well as several other gatherings of citizens under pious pretexts. In short, as M. Jules van Praet succinctly remarks, "After having finished with the men, Charles-Quint addressed himself to the institutions, and replaced the Communal privileges of which the Ghent population had made such a dangerous use, by a celebrated law which aimed at providing for the future, as well as for the present, and at definitively subjecting to the monarchical system a city which had grown into the possession of a republican government. The ground-work of the innovation was, that the elective magistrates of the people became, through the working of the new institution, officers of the Empire."\*

Now, we are invited by Mr. Motley to admire the "violent little commonwealths" of Holland and Flanders. He affirms, perhaps with reason, that "the most sanguinary tumults which they ever enacted in the face of day were better than the order and

\* "Essais sur l'Histoire Politique des Derniers Siècles." Par Jules van Praet, p. 164.

silence born of the midnight darkness of despotism"—but was there no middle course? M. de Lamartine somewhere observes that revolutions begin from above—it is only seditions that spring from below. Surely, that is the experience of our own history. The Magna Charta was wrung from the sovereign by the great lords and barons, and not by the commonalty. No doubt, those barons thought chiefly of their own interests in the first instance, but they also stipulated that the ancient customs and liberties of cities and boroughs should be secured to them, that justice should be equally administered to all men, that every freeman should be tried by his peers, and they even demanded in the original rough draft that no "tallages and aids" should be exacted from the city of London and other cities, without the consent of the general council of the nation. Simon de Montfort, again, who restored the Saxon Witangemote,—though Sir Edward Creasy prefers to found the English Parliament upon the political constitutions of Spain—was a nobleman of the highest rank, and neither a rich burgher nor the ambitious headman of a guild. Had the French nobility at the close of the last century been less frivolous and self-indulgent, had they frankly placed themselves at the head of the popular movement, a revolution might have been effected without the shedding of innocent blood, and without the permanent demoralization and degeneracy of a great people. The mediæval aristocracy of Flanders were in many respects similar to the French nobles in the eighteenth century, except that they were actually the proprietors of their ancestral estates, and exercised

a proportionate influence over their vassals and dependents. They had, however, an equal contempt for commerce and industry, and sided with their liege lord in all his disputes with the democracy of the Communes.

Mr. Motley's error, however, consists in coupling Flanders with Holland. There was, in fact, no analogy between the conditions of the two kindred peoples. The Hollanders were primarily addicted to agriculture, to which they subsequently added commerce, but the feudal institutions never struck root in their country. They were essentially republicans, and were united as a nation in a far higher degree than the Flemings attained until comparatively recent times. Their love of liberty was an instinct, and not a spasmodic sentiment. At times, indeed, their normal tranquillity was vexed by tumults and even by massacre, but the disturbing causes were never so mean and narrow as sufficed to excite the citizens of Bruges or of Ghent to acts of madness. The Hollanders found their reward in the possession of freedom and in the enjoyment of great material prosperity, gilded with the universal respect of mankind; while the Netherlands passed under the yoke of Austria, of Spain, and of France, and were never really free until the Revolution of 1830—31. At the same time the study of Flemish history in the middle ages is not without interest at the passing moment, when the flood of democracy in our own country threatens to submerge the ancient landmarks. As it was in the Flemish Communes, as it is in the United States, so will it be in the British Isles should the populace

succeed in gaining the upper hand. Men of birth, position, and mental culture will withdraw from the management of public affairs, and will abandon the arena to men of the baser sort, pushing, pretentious, and self-sufficient. The prospect is not pleasant to contemplate, nor is there much reason to expect that the experiences of past ages will avail to check or modify the downward tendency of the present generation.

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